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O F

WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

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ZWICKAU,

PRINTED FOR BROTHERS SCHUMANN.

1824.

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KENILWORTH;

A ROMANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF „WAVERLEY,”
„IVANHOE,” etc.

No scandal about Queen Elizabeth, I hope?

THE CRITIC.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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KENILWORTH.

CHAPTER. XIX.

*Pistol. And tidings do I bring, and lucky
joys,*

And happy news of price.

*Falstaff. I pry thee now deliver them like to
men of this world.*

*Pistol. A foutra for the world, and world-
lings base!*

I speak of Africa, and golden joys.

Henry IV. Part 2.

THE public room of the Black Bear at Cum-
nor, to which the scene of our story now re-
turns, boasted, on the evening which we treat
of, no ordinary assemblage of guests. There
had been a fair in the neighbourhood, and the

cutting mercer of Abingdon, with some of the other personages whom the reader has already been made acquainted with, as friends and customers of Giles Gosling, had already formed their wonted circle around the evening fire, and were talking over the news of the day.

A lively, bustling, arch fellow, whose pack and oaken *ell-wand*, studded duly with brass points, denoted him to be of Autolycus's profession, occupied a good deal of the attention, and furnished much of the amusement, of the evening. The pedlars of these days, it must be remembered, were men of far greater importance than the degenerate and degraded hawkers of our modern times. It was by means of these peripatetic venders that the country-trade, in the finer manufactures used in female dress particularly, was almost entirely carried on; and if a merchant of this description arrived at the dignity of travelling with a packhorse, he was a person of no small consequence, and company for the most substantial yeoman or Franklin whom he might meet in his wanderings.

The pedlar of whom we speak, bore accordingly, an active and unrebuked share in the merriment to which the rafters of the bonny Black Bear of Cumnor resounded. He had his smile with pretty Mistress Cicely, his broad laugh with mine host, and his jest upon dashing Master

Goldthred, who, though indeed without any such benevolent intention on his own part, was the general butt of the evening. The pedlar and he were closely engaged in a dispute upon the preference due to the Spanish nether stock over the black Gascoigne hose, and mine host had just winked to the guests around him, as who should say, "You will have mirth presently, my masters," when the trampling of horses was heard in the court-yard, and the hostler was loudly summoned, with a few of the newest oaths then in vogue to add force to the invocation. Out tumbled Will Hostler, John Tapster, and all the militia of the inn, who had slunk from their posts in order to collect some scattered crumbs of the mirth which was flying about among the customers. Out into the yard sallied my host himself also, to do fitting salutation to his new guests; and presently returned, ushering into the apartment his own worthy nephew, Michael Lambourne, pretty tolerably drunk, and having under his escort the astrologer. Alasco, though still a little old man, had, by altering his gown to a riding-dress, trimming his beard and eyebrows, and so forth, struck at least a score of years from his apparent age, and might now seem an active man of sixty, or little upwards. He appeared at present exceedingly anxious, and had insisted much with Lambourne that they

should not enter the inn, but go straight forward to the place of their destination. But Lambourne would not be controuled. "By Cancer and Capricorn," he vociferated, "and the whole heavenly host — besides all the stars I saw in the southern heavens, to which these northern blinkers are but farthing candles, I will be unkindly for no one's humour — I will stay and salute my worthy uncle here. — Chesu! that good blood should ever be forgotten betwixt friends! — A gallon of your best, uncle, and let it go round to the health of the noble Earl of Leicester! — What! Shall we not colloque together, and warm the cockles of our ancient kindness? — Shall we not colloque, I say?"

"With all my heart, kinsman," said mine host, who obviously wished to be rid of him; "but are you to stand shot to all this good liquor?"

This is a question has quelled many a jovial toper, but it moved not the purpose of Lambourne's soul. "Question my means, nuncle?" he said, producing a handful of mixed gold and silver pieces; "question Mexico and Peru — question the Queen's exchequer — God save her Majesty! — She is my good Lord's good mistress."

"Well, kinsman," said mine host, "it is my business to sell wine to those who can buy it —

So, Jack Tapster, do me thine office. — But I would I knew how to come by money as lightly as thou doest, Mike."

"Why, uncle," said Lambourne, "I will tell thee a secret — Dost see this little old fellow here? as old and withered a chip as ever the devil put into his porridge — and yet, uncle, between you and me — he hath Potosi in that brain of his — 'Sblood! he can coin ducats faster than I can vent oaths."

"I will have none of his coinage in my purse though, Michael," said mine host; "I know what belongs to falsifying the Queen's coin."

"Thou art an ass, uncle, for as old as thou art — Pull me not by the skirts, doctor, thou art an ass thyself to boot — so, being both asses, I tell ye I spoke but metaphorically."

"Are you mad?" said the old man; "is the devil in you? — can you not let us begone without drawing all men's eyes on us?"

"Say'st thou?" said Lambourne; "Thou art deceived now — no man shall see you an I give the word. — By heavens, masters, an any one dare to look on this old gentleman, I will slash the eyes out of his head with my poniard — So sit down, old friend, and be merry — these are mine ancient inmates, and will betray no man."

"Had you not better withdraw to a private apartment, nephew," said Giles Gosling, "you

“speak strange matter,” he added, “and there be intelligencers every where.”

“I care not for them,” said the magnanimous Michael — “intelligencers, pshaw! — I serve the noble Earl of Leicester — Here comes the wine — Fill round, Master Skinker, a carouse to the health of the flower of England, the noble Earl of Leicester! I say, the noble Earl of Leicester! He that does me not reason is a swine of Sussex, and I’ll make him kneel to the pledge, if I should cut his hams and smoke them for bacon.”

None disputed a pledge given under such formidable penalties; and Michael Lambourne whose drunken humour was not of course diminished by this new potation, went on in the same wild way, renewing his acquaintance with such of the guests as he had formerly known, and experiencing a reception in which there was now something of deference, mingled with a good deal of fear; for the least servitor of the favourite Earl, especially such a man as Lambourne, was, for very sufficient reasons, an object both of the one and of the other.

In the mean-while, the old man, seeing his guide in this uncontrollable humour, ceased to remonstrate with him, and sitting down in the most obscure corner of the room, called for a small measure of sack, over which he seemed, as it were, to slumber, withdrawing himself as

much as possible from general observation, and doing nothing which could recal his existence to the recollection of his fellow-traveller, who by this time had got into close intimacy with his ancient comrade, Goldthred of Abingdon.

“Never believe me, bully Mike,” said the mercer, “if I am not as glad to see thee as ever I was to see a customer’s money! — Why, thou canst give a friend a sly place at a mask or a revel now, Mike; ay, or, I warrant thee, thou canst say in my lord’s ear, when my honourable lord is down in these parts, and wants a Spanish ruff or the like — thou canst say in his ear, there is mine old friend, young Lawrence Goldthred of Abingdon, has as good wares, lawn, tiffany, cambric, and so forth — ay and is as pretty a piece of man’s flesh too as is in Berkshire, and will ruffle it for your lordship with any man of his inches; and thou may’st say” —

“I can say a hundred damned lies besides, mercer,” answered Lambourne, “what, one must not stand upon a good word for a friend!”

“Here is to thee, Mike, with all my heart,” said the mercer; “and thou canst tell one the reality of the new fashions too — Here was a rogue pedlar but now, was crying up the old-fashioned Spanish nether stock over the Gascoigne hose, although thou seest how well the French hose set off the leg and knee, being

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adorned with particoloured garters and garniture in conformity."

"Excellent, excellent," replied Lambourne; "why, thy limber bit of a thigh, thrust through that bunch of slashed buckram and tiffany, shews like a housewife's distaff, when the flax is half spun off."

"Said I not so?" said the mercer, whose shallow brain was now overflowed in his turn; "where then, where be this rascal pedlar? — there was a pedlar here but now, methinks — Mine host, where the foul fiend is this pedlar?"

"Where wise men should be, Master Goldthred," replied Giles Gosling; "even shut up in his private chamber, telling over the sales of to day, and preparing for the custom of to morrow."

"Hang him, a mechanical chuff," said the mercer; "but for shame, it were a good deed to ease him of his wares, — a set of peddling knaves, who stroll through the land, and hurt the established trader. There are good fellows in Berkshire yet, mine host — your pedlar may be met withal on Maiden Castle."

"Ay," replied mine host, laughing, "and he who meets him may meet his match — the pedlar is a tall man."

"Is he?" said Goldthred.

“Is he?” replied the host; “ay, by cock and pye is he — the very pedlar he who raddled Robin Hood so tightly, as the song says, —

Now Robin Hood drew his sword so good,
The pedlar drew his brand,
And he hath raddled him, Robin Hood,
Till he neither could see nor stand.”

“Hang him, foul scroyle, let him pass,” said the mercer; “if he be such a one, there were small worship to be won upon him. — And now tell me, Mike — my honest Mike, how wears the Hollands you won of me?”

“Why, well, as you may see, Master Goldthred,” answered Mike; “I will bestow a pot on thee for the handsel. — Fill the flaggon, Master Tapster.”

“Thou wilt win no more Hollands, I think, on such wager, friend Mike,” said the mercer; “for the sulky swain, Tony Foster, rails at thee all to nought, and swears you shall n’er darken his doors again, for that your oaths are enough to blow the roof off a Christian man’s dwelling.”

“Doth he say so, the mincing hypocritical miser?” vociferated Lambourne; — “Why then he shall come down and receive my commands here, this blessed night, under my uncle’s roof! And I will ring him such a black sanctus, that

he shall think the devil hath him by the skirts for a month to come, for barely hearing me."

"Nay, now the pottle-pot is uppermost, with a witness," said the mercer. "Tony Foster obey thy whistle! — Alas! good Mike, go sleep — go sleep."

"I tell thee what, thou thin-faced gull," said Michael Lambourne, in high chafe, "I will wager thee fifty angels against the first five shelves of thy shop, numbering upward from the false light, with all that is on them, that I make Tony Foster come down to this public house, before we have finished three rounds."

"I will lay no bet to that amount," said the mercer, something sobered by an offer which intimated rather too private a knowledge, on Lambourne's part, of the secret recesses of his shop, "I will lay no such wager," he said; "but I will stake five angels against thy five, if thou wilt, that Tony Foster will not leave his own roof, or come to ale-house after prayer time, for thee, or any man."

"Content," said Lambourne. — "Here, uncle, hold stakes, and let one of your young bleed-barrels there — one of your infant tapsters, trip presently up to The Place, and give this letter to Master Foster, and say that I, his ingler Michael Lambourne, pray to speak with him at mine uncle's castle here, upon business of grave

import. — Away with thee, child, for it is now sun down, and the wretch goeth to bed with the birds, to save mutton-suet — faugh!”

Shortly after this messenger was dispatched — an interval which was spent in drinking and buffoonery, — he returned with the answer, that Master Foster was coming presently.

“Won, won!” said Lambourne, darting on the stake.

“Not till he comes, if you please,” said the mercer, interfering.

“Why, ’sblood, he is at the threshold,” replied Michael — “What said he, boy?”

“If it please your worship,” answered the messenger, “he looked out of window, with a musketoon in his hand, and when I delivered your errand, which I did with fear and trembling, he said, with a vinegar aspect, that your worship might be gone to the infernal regions.”

“Or to hell, I suppose, said Lambourne — “it is there he disposes of all that are not of the congregation.”

“Even so,” said the boy; “I used the other phrase, as being the more poetical.”

“An ingenious youth,” said Michael; “shalt have a drop to whet thy poetical whistle — And what said Foster next?”

“He called me back,” answered the boy, “and bid me say, you might come to him, if you had aught to say to him.”

“And what next?” said Lambourne.

“He read the letter, and seemed in a fluster, and asked if your worship was in drink — and I said you were speaking a little Spanish, as one who had been in the Canaries.”

“Out, you diminutive pint-pot, whelped of an overgrown reckoning!” replied Lambourne —

“Out! — But what said he then?”

“Why, he muttered, that if he came not, your worship would bolt out what were better kept in; and so he took his old fleet cap, and thread bare blue cloak, and, as I said before, he will be here incontinent.”

“There is truth in what he said,” replied Lambourne, as if speaking to himself — “My brain has played me its old dog’s trick — but couragio — let him approach! — I have not rolled about in the world, for many a day, to fear Tony Foster, be I drunk or sober. — Bring me a flagon of cold water, to christen my sack withal.”

While Lambourne, whom the approach of Foster seemed to have recalled to a sense of his own condition, was busied in preparing to receive him, Giles Cosling stole up to the apart-

ment of the pedlar, whom he found traversing the room in much agitation.

“You withdrew yourself suddenly from the company,” said the landlord to the guest.

“It was time, when the devil became one among you,” replied the pedlar.

“It is not courteous in you to term my nephew by such a name,” said Gosling, “nor is it kindly in me to reply to it; and yet, in some sort, Mike may be considered as a limb of Satan.”

“Pooh — I talk not of the swaggering ruffian,” replied the pedlar, “it is of the other, who, for aught I know — But when go they? or wherefore come they?”

“Marry, these are questions I cannot answer,” replied the host. “But, look you, sir, you have brought me a token from worthy Master Tressilian — a pretty stone it is.” He took out the ring, and looked at it, adding, as he put it into his purse again, that it was too rich a guerdon for any thing he could do for the worthy donor. He was, he said, in the public line, and it ill became him to be too inquisitive into other folks concerns; he had already said, that he could hear nothing, but that the lady lived still at Cumnor Place, in the closest seclusion, and, to such as by chance had a view of her, seemed pensive and discontented with her solitude. “But

here," he said, "if you are desirous to gratify your master, is the rarest chance that hath occurred for this many a day. Tony Foster is coming down hither, and it is but letting Mike Lambourne smell another wine-flask, and the Queen's command would not move him from the ale-bench. So they are fast for an hour or so — Now, if you will don your pack, which will be your best excuse, you may, perchance, win the ear of the old servant, being assured of the master's absence, to let you try to get some custom of the lady, and then you may learn more of her condition than I or any other can tell you."

"True — very true," answered Wayland, for he it was; "an excellent device, but methinks something dangerous — for say Foster should return?"

"Very possible indeed," replied the host.

"Or say," continued Wayland, "the lady should render me cold thanks for my exertions?"

"As is not unlikely," replied Giles Gosling. "I marvel, Master Tressilian will take such heed of her that cares not for him."

"In either case I were foully sped," said Wayland; "and therefore I do not, on the whole, much relish your device."

"Nay, but take me with you, good master

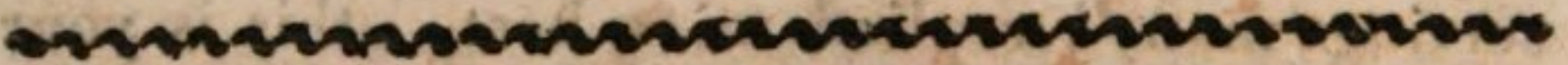
serving-man," replied mine host, "this is your master's business and not mine; you best know the risk to be encountered, or how far you are willing to brave it. But that which you will not yourself hazard, you cannot expect others to risk."

"Hold, hold," said Wayland; "tell me but one thing — Goes yonder old man up to Cumnor?"

"Surely, I think so," said the landlord; "their servant said he was to take their baggage thither, but the ale-tap has been as potent for him as the sack-spigot has been for Michael."

"It is enough," said Wayland, assuming an air of resolution — "I will thwart that old villain's projects — my affright at his baleful aspect begins to abate, and my hatred to arise. Help me on with my pack, good mine host — And look to thyself, old Albumazar — there is a malignant influence in thy horoscope, and it gleams from the constellation Ursa Major."

So saying, he assumed his burthen, and, guided by the landlord through the postern gate of the Black Bear, took the most private way from thence up to Cumnor Place.



CHAPTER XX.

Clown. You have of these pedlars, that have more in 'em than you'd think, sister.

Winter's Tale, Act IV., Scene 3.

IN his anxiety to obey the Earl's repeated charges of secrecy, as well as from his own unsocial and miserly habits, Anthony Foster was more desirous, by his mode of house-keeping, to escape observation, than to resist intrusive curiosity. Thus, instead of a numerous household, to secure his charge, and defend his house, he studied, as much as possible, to elude notice, by diminishing his attendants; so that, unless when there were attendants of the Earl, or of Varney, in the mansion, one old male domestic, and two old crones, who assisted in keeping the Countess's apartments in order,

were the only servants of the family. It was one of these old women who opened the door when Wayland knocked, and answered his petition, to be admitted to exhibit his wares to the ladies of the family, with a volley of vituperation, couched in what is there called the *jowring* dialect. The pedlar found the means of checking this vociferation, by slipping a silver groat into her hand, and intimating the present of some stuff for a coif, if the lady would buy of his wares.

“God ield thee, for mine is aw in littocks — Slocket with thy pack into gharn, mon — Her walks in gharn.” Into the garden she ushered the pedlar accordingly, and pointing to an old ruinous garden-house, said, “Yonder be’s her, mon, — yonder be’s her — Zhe will buy changes an zhe loikes stuffs.”

“She has left me to come off as I may,” thought Wayland, as he heard the hag shut the garden-door behind him. “But they shall not beat me, and they dare not murder me, for so little trespass, and by this fair twilight. Hang it, I will on — a brave general never thought of his retreat till he was defeated. I see two females in the old garden-house yonder — but how to address them? — Stay — Will Shakespeare, be my friend in need. I will give them a taste of Autolycus.” He then sung, with a

good voice, and becoming audacity, the popular play-house ditty,

«Lawn as white as driven snow,
Cyprus black as e'er was crow,
Gloves as sweet as damask roses,
Masks for faces and for noses.»

«What hath fortune sent us here for an unwonted sight, Janet?» said the lady.

«One of these merchants of vanity, called pedlars,” answered Janet, demurely, «who utters his light wares in lighter measures — I marvel old Dorcas let him pass.»

«It is a lucky chance, girl,” said the Countess; «we lead a heavy life here, and this may while off a weary hour.»

«Aye, my gracious lady,” said Janet; «but my father?»

«He is not *my* father, Janet, nor I hope my master,” answered the lady — «I say, call the man hither — I want some things.»

«Nay,” replied Janet, „your ladyship has but to say so in the next packet, and if England can furnish them they will be sent. — There will come mischief on't — Pray, dearest lady, let me bid the man be gone!”

“I will have thee bid him come hither,” said the Countess, — “or stay, thou terrified fool, I will bid him myself, and spare thee a chiding.”

“Ah! well-a-day, dearest lady, if that were the worst,” said Janet, sadly, while the lady called to the pedlar, “Good fellow, step forward — undo thy pack — if thou hast good wares, chance has sent thee hither for my convenience, and thy profit.”

“What may your ladyship please to lack?” said Wayland, unstrapping his pack, and displaying its contents with as much dexterity as if he had been bred to the trade. Indeed he had occasionally pursued it in the course of his roving life, and now commended his wares with all the volubility of a trader, and shewed some skill in the main art of placing prices upon them.

“What do I please to lack?” said the lady; “why, considering I have not for six long months bought one yard of lawn or cambric, or one trinket, the most inconsiderable, for my own use, and at my own choice, the better question is, what hast thou got to sell? Lay aside for me that cambric partlet and pair of sleeves — and those roundells of gold fringe, drawn out with cyprus — and that short cloak of cherry-coloured fine cloth, garnished with gold buttons

and loops — is it not of an absolute fancy, Janet?"

"Nay, my lady," replied Janet, "if you consult my poor judgment, it is, methinks, over gawdy for a graceful habit."

"Now, out upon thy judgment, if it be no brighter, wench," said the Countess; "thou shalt wear it thyself for penance sake; and I promise, the gold buttons being somewhat massive, will comfort thy father, and reconcile him to the cherry coloured body. See that he snap them not away, Janet, and send them to bear company with the imprisoned angels which he keeps captive in his strong-box."

"May I pray your ladyship to spare my poor father!" said Janet.

"Nay, but why should any one spare him that is so sparing of his own nature?" replied the lady. — "Well, but to our gear — That head garniture for myself, and that silver bodkin, mounted with pearl; — and take off two gowns of that russet cloth for Dorcas and Alison, Janet, to keep the old wretches warm against winter comes — And stay, hast thou no perfumes and sweet bags, or any handsome casting hottles of the newest mode?"

"Were I pedlar in earnest, I were a made merchant," thought Wayland, as he busied himself to answer the demands which she throng-

ed one on another, with the eagerness of a young lady who has been long secluded from such a pleasing occupation. "But how to bring her to a moment's serious reflection." Then as he exhibited his choicest collection of essences and perfumes, he at once arrested her attention by observing, that these articles had almost risen to double value, since the magnificent preparations made by the Earl of Leicester to entertain the Queen and court at his princely Castle of Kenilworth.

"Ha!" said the Countess, hastily; "that rumour then is true, Janet."

"Surely, madam," answered Wayland; "and I marvel it hath not reached your noble ladyship's ears. The Queen of England feasts with the noble Earl for a week during the Summer's Progress; and there are many who will tell you England will have a king, and England's Elizabeth, God save her, a husband, ere the Progress be over."

"They lie like villains!" said the Countess, bursting forth impatiently.

"For God's sake, madam, consider," said Janet, trembling with apprehension; "who would cumber themselves about pedlar's tidings?"

"Yes, Janet!" exclaimed the Countess; "right, thou hast corrected me justly. Such reports, blighting the reputation of England's brightest

and noblest peer, can only find currency amongst the mean, the abject, and the infamous."

"May I perish, lady," said Wayland Smith, observing that her violence directed itself towards him, "if I have done any thing to merit this strange passion! — I have said but what many men say."

By this time the Countess had recovered her composure, and endeavoured, alarmed by the anxious hints of Janet, to suppress all appearance of displeasure. "I were loth," she said, "good fellow, that our Queen should change the virgin style, so dear to us her people — think not of it." And then, as if desirous to change the subject, she added, "And what is this paste, so carefully put up in the silver box?" as she examined the contents of a casket in which drugs and perfumes were contained in separate drawers.

"It is a remedy, madam, for a disorder, of which I trust your ladyship will never have reason to complain. The amount of a small turkey-bean, swallowed daily for a week, fortifies the heart against those black vapours which arise from solitude, melancholy, unrequited affection, disappointed hope" —

"Are you a fool, friend?" said the Countess, sharply; "or do you think, because I have good-naturedly purchased your trumpery goods at your

roguish prices, that you may put any gullery you will on me? — who ever heard that affections of the heart were cured by medicines given to the body?"

"Under your honourable favour," said Wayland, "I am an honest man, and I have sold my goods at an honest price — As to this most precious medicine, when I told its qualities, I asked you not to purchase it, so why should I lie to you? I say not it will cure a rooted affection of the mind, which only God and time can do; but I say, that this restorative relieves the black vapours which are engendered in the body of that melancholy which broodeth on the mind. I have relieved many with it, both in court and city, and of late one Master Edmund Tressilian, a worshipful gentleman in Cornwall, who on some slight, received, it was told me, where he had set his affections, was brought into that state of melancholy which made his friends alarmed for his life."

He paused, and the lady remained silent for some time, and then asked, with a voice which she strove in vain to render firm and indifferent in its tone, "Is the gentleman you have mentioned perfectly recovered?"

"Passably, madam," answered Wayland; "he hath at least no bodily complaint."

"I will take some of the medicine, Janet,"

said the Countess. "I too have sometimes that dark melancholy which overclouds the brain."

"You shall not do so, madam," said Janet; "who shall answer that this fellow vends what is wholesome?"

"I will myself warrant my good faith," said Wayland; and, taking a part of the medicine, he swallowed it before them. The Countess now bought what remained, a step to which Janet, by farther objections, only determined her the more obstinately. She even took the first dose upon the Instant, and professed to feel her heart lightened and her spirits augmented, — a consequence which, in all probability, existed only in her own imagination. The lady then piled the purchases she had made together, flung her purse to Janet, and desired her to compute the amount and to pay the pedlar; while she herself, as if tired of the amusement she at first found in conversing with him, wished him good evening, and walked carelessly into the house, thus depriving Wayland of every opportunity to speak with her in private. He hastened, however, to attempt an explanation with Janet.

"Maiden," he said, "thou hast the face of one who should love her mistress. She hath much need of faithful service."

"And well deserves it at my hands," replied Janet; "but what of that?"

“Maiden, I am not altogether what I seem,” said the pedlar, lowering his voice.

“The less like to be am honest man,” said Janet.

“The more so,” answered Wayland, “since I am no pedlar.”

“Get thee gone then instantly, or I will call for assistance,” said Janet; “my father must ere this be returned.”

“Do not be so rash,” said Wayland; “you will do what you may repent of. I am one of your mistress’s friends; and she had need of more, not that thou should’st ruin those she hath.”

“How shall I know that?” said Janet.

“Look me in the face,” said Wayland Smith, “and see if thou dost not read honesty in my looks.”

And in truth, though by no means handsome, there was in his physiognomy the sharp, keen expression of inventive genius and prompt intellect, which, joined to quick and brilliant eyes, a well-formed mouth, and an intelligent smile, often gives grace and interest to features which are both homely and irregular. Janet looked at him with the sly simplicity of her sect, and replied, “Notwithstanding thy boasted honesty, friend, and although I am not accustomed to read and pass judgment on such volumes

as thou hast submitted to my perusal, I think I see in thy countenance something of the pedlar — something of the picaroon.”

“On a small scale, perhaps,” said Wayland Smith, laughing. “But this evening, or to-morrow, will an old man come hither with thy father, who has the stealthy step of the cat, the shrewd and vindictive eye of the rat, the fawning wile of the spaniel, the determined grasp of the mastiff — of him beware, for your own sake and that of your mistress. See you, fair Janet, he brings the venom of the aspic under the assumed innocence of the dove. What precise mischief he meditates towards you I cannot guess, but death and disease have ever dogged his footsteps. — Say nought of this to thy mistress — my art suggests to me that in her state, the fear of evil may be as dangerous as its operation — But see that she take my specific, for — (he lowered his voice and spoke low but impressively in her ear,) it is an antidote against poison — Hark, they enter the garden!”

In effect, a sound of noisy mirth and loud talking approached the garden door, alarmed by which Wayland Smith sprung into the midst of a thicket of overgrown shrubs, while Janet withdrew to the garden-house that she might not incur observation, and that she might at the

same time conceal, at least for the present, the purchases made from the supposed pedlar, which lay scattered on the floor of the summer-house.

Janet, however, had no occasion for anxiety. Her father, his old attendant, Lord Leicester's domestic, and the astrologer, entered the garden in tumult and in extreme perplexity, endeavouring to quiet Lambourne, whose brain had now become completely fired with liquor, and who was one of those unfortunate persons, who, being once stirred with the vinous stimulus, do not fall asleep like other drunkards, but remain long partially influenced by it, for many hours, until at length, by successive draughts, they are elevated into a state of uncontrollable frenzy. Like many men in this state also, Lambourne neither lost the power of motion, speech, or expression; but, on the contrary, spoke with unwonted emphasis and readiness, and told all that at another time he would have been most desirous to have kept secret.

“What!” ejaculated Michael, at the full extent of his voice, “am I to have no welcome — no carouse, when I have brought fortune to your old ruinous dog-house in the shape of a devil's ally, that can change slate-shivers into Spanish dollars? — Here, you Tony Fire the-Faggot, papist, puritan, hypocrite, miser, pro-

fligate, devil, compounded of all men's sins, bow down and reverence him who has brought into thy house the very mammon thou worshippest."

"For God's sake," said Foster, "speak low — come into the house — thou shalt have wine, or whatever thou wilt."

"No, old puckfist, I will have it here," thundered the inebriated ruffian — "here *al fresco*, as the Italian hath it. — No, no, I will not drink with that poisoning devil within doors, to be choked with the fumes of arsenic and quick-silver; I learned from villain Varney to beware of that."

"Fetch him wine, in the name of all the fiends," said the alchemist.

"Aha! and thou wouldst spice it for me, old Truepenny, wouldst thou not? Ay, I should have coperas, and hellebore, and vitriol, and aquafortis, and twenty devilish materials, bubbling in my brain-pan like a charm to raise the devil in a witch's cauldron. Hand me the flask thyself, old Tony Fire-the-Faggot — and let it be cool — I will have no wine mulled at the pile of the old burned bishops — Or stay, let Leicester be king if he will — good — and Varney, villain Varney, grand vizier, — why, excellent, — and what shall I be then? — why, emperor — Emperor Lambourne. — I will see this

choice piece of beauty that they have walled up here for their private pleasures — I will have her this very night to serve my wine-cup, and put on my night-cap. What should a fellow do with two wives, were he twenty times an Earl? — answer me that, Tony boy, you old reprobate hypocritical dog, whom God struck out of the book of life, but tormented with the constant wish to be restored to it — You old bishop-burning, blasphemous fanatic, answer me that.”

“I will stick my knife to the haft in him,” said Foster, in a low tone, which trembled with passion.

“For the love of heaven, no violence,” said the astrologer. “It cannot but be looked closely into. — Here, honest Lambourne, wilt thou pledge me to the health of the noble Earl of Leicester and Master Richard Varney?”

“I will, mine old Albumazar — I will, my trusty vender of rat’s-bane — I would kiss thee, mine honest infractor of the Lex Julia, (as they said at Leyden,) didst thou not flavour so damnable of sulphur, and such fiendish apothecaries stuff. — Here goes it, up seyes — to Varney and Leicester! — two more noble mounting spirits — and more dark-seeking, deep-diving, high-flying, malicious, ambitious miscreants — well, I say no more, but I will whet my dagger.

on his heart - spones, that refuses to pledge me!
And so, my masters" —

Thus speaking, Lambourne exhausted the cup which the astrologer had handed him, and which contained not wine, but distilled spirits. He swore half an oath, dropped the empty cup from his grasp, laid his hand on his sword without being able to draw it, reeled, and fell without sense or motion into the arms of the domestic, who dragged him off to his chamber and put him to bed.

In the general confusion, Janet regained her lady's chamber unobserved, trembling like an aspen leaf, but determined to keep secret from the Countess the dreadful surmises which she could not help entertaining from the drunken ravings of Lambourne. Her fears, however, though they assumed no certain shape, kept pace with the advice of the pedlar; and she confirmed her mistress in her purpose of taking the medicine which he had recommended, from which it is probable she would otherwise have dissuaded her. Neither had these intimations escaped the ears of Wayland, who knew much better how to interpret them. He felt much compassion at beholding so lovely a creature as the Countess, and whom he had first seen in the bosom of domestic happiness, exposed to the machinations of such a gang of villains. His

passions, too, had been highly excited, by hearing the voice of his old master, against whom he nourished, in equal degree, the passions of hatred and fear. He nourished also a pride in his own art and resources; and, dangerous as the task was, he that night formed a determination to attain the bottom of the mystery, and to aid the distressed lady, if it were yet possible. From some words which Lambourne had dropped amongst his ravings, Wayland now, for the first time, felt inclined to doubt that Varney had acted entirely on his own account, in wooing and winning the affections of this beautiful creature. Fame asserted of this zealous retainer, that he had accommodated his lord in former love intrigues; and it occurred to Wayland Smith, that Leicester himself might be the party chiefly interested. Her marriage with the Earl he could not suspect; but even the discovery of such a passing intrigue with a lady of Mistress Amy Robsart's rank, was a secret of the deepest importance to the stability of the favourite's power over Elizabeth. "If Leicester would hesitate to stifle such a rumour by very strange means," said he to himself, "he has those about him who would do him that favour without waiting for his consent. If I would meddle in this business, it must be as my old master uses to compound his manna of Satan, with a close

mask on my face. So I will quit Giles Gosling to-morrow, and change my course and place of residence as often as a hunted fox. I should like to see this little puritan, too, once more. She looks both pretty and intelligent, to have come of such a caitiff as Antony Fire-the-Faggot."

Giles Gosling received the adieus of Wayland rather joyfully than otherwise. The honest publican saw so much peril in crossing the course of the Earl of Leicester's favourite, that his virtue was scarce able to support him in the task, and he was well pleased when it was likely to be removed from his shoulders; still, however, professing his good will, and readiness, in case of need, to do Mr. Tressilian or his emissary any service, in so far as consisted with his character of a publican.


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CHAPTER XXI.

*Vaulting ambition, that o'erleaps itself,  
And falls on tother side.*

*Macbeth.*

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THE splendour of the approaching revels at Kenilworth was now the conversation through all England; and every thing was collected at home, or from abroad, which could add to the gaiety or glory of the prepared reception of Elizabeth, at the house of her most distinguished favourite. Meantime, Leicester appeared daily to advance in the Queen's favour. He was perpetually by her side in council, willingly listened to in the moments of courtly recreation — favoured with approaches even to familiar intimacy — looked up to by all who had aught to hope at court — courted by foreign ministers with the most flattering testimonies of respect from their sovereigns —



the *Alter Ego*, as it seemed, of the stately Elizabeth, who was now very generally supposed to be studying the time and opportunity for associating him, by marriage, into her sovereign power.

Amid such a tide of prosperity, this minion of fortune, and of the Queen's favour, was probably the most unhappy man in the realm which seemed at his devotion. He had the Fairy King's superiority over his friends and dependants, and saw much which they could not. The character of his mistress was intimately known to him; it was his minute and studied acquaintance with her humours, as well as her noble qualities, which, joined to his powerful mental qualities, and his eminent external accomplishments, had raised him so high in her favour; and it was that very knowledge of her disposition which led him to apprehend at every turn some sudden and overwhelming disgrace. Leicester was like a pilot possessed of a chart, which points out to him all the peculiarities of his navigation, but which exhibits so many shoals, breakers, and reefs of rocks, that his anxious eye reaps little more from observing them, than to be convinced that his final escape can be little else than miraculous.

In fact, Queen Elizabeth had a character strangely compounded of the strongest masculine



sense, with those foibles which are chiefly supposed proper to the female sex. Her subjects had the full benefit of her virtues, which far predominated over her weaknesses; but her courtiers, and those about her person, had often to sustain sudden and embarrassing turns of caprice, and the sallies of a temper which was both jealous and despotic. She was the nursing-mother of her people, but she was also the true daughter of Henry VIII.; and though early sufferings and an excellent education had repressed and modified, they had not altogether destroyed, the hereditary temper of that "hard-ruled King." — "Her mind," says her witty god-son, Sir John Harrington, who had experienced both the smiles and the frowns which he describes, "was oftime like the gentle air, that cometh from the western point in a summer's morn — 'twas sweet and refreshing to all around her. Her speech did win all affections. And again, she could put forth such alterations, when obedience was lacking, as left no doubting *whose* daughter she was. When she smiled, it was a pure sunshine, that every one did chuse to bask in, if they could; but anon came a storm, from a sudden gathering of clouds, and the thunder fell, in a wondrous manner, on all alike." \*

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\* *Nugae Antiquae*, Vol. I. pp. 355, 356 — 362.



This variability of disposition, as Leicester well knew, was chiefly formidable to those who had a share in the Queen's affections, and who depended rather on her personal regard, than on the indispensable services which they could render to her councils and her crown. The favour of Burleigh, or of Walsingham, of a description far less striking than that by which he was himself upheld, was founded, as Leicester well knew, on Elizabeth's solid judgment, not on her partiality; and was, therefore, free from all those principles of change and decay, necessarily incident to that which chiefly arose from personal accomplishments and female predilection. These great and sage statesmen were judged of by the Queen, only with reference to the measures they suggested, and the reasons by which they supported their opinions in council; whereas the success of Leicester's course depended on all those light and changeable gales of caprice and humour, which thwart or favour the progress of a lover in the favour of his mistress, and she, too, a mistress, who was ever and anon becoming fearful lest she should forget the dignity, or compromise the authority of the Queen, while she indulged the affections of the woman. Of the difficulties which surrounded his power, "too great to keep or to resign," Leicester was fully sensible; and, as he looked



anxiously round for the means of maintaining himself in his precarious situation, and sometimes contemplated those of descending from it in safety, he saw but little hope of either. At such moments, his thoughts turned to dwell upon his secret marriage, and its consequences; and it was in bitterness against himself, if not against his unfortunate Countess, that he ascribed to that hasty measure, adopted in the ardour of what he now called inconsiderate passion, at once the impossibility of placing his power on a solid basis, and the imminent prospect of its precipitate downfall.

“Men say,” thus ran his thoughts, in these anxious and repentant moments, “that I might marry Elizabeth, and become King of England. All things suggest this. The match is carolled in ballads, while the rabble throw their caps up — It has been touched upon in the schools — whispered in the presence-chamber — recommended from the pulpit — prayed for in the Calvinistic churches abroad — touched on by statistes in the very council at home — These bold insinuations have been rebutted by no rebuke, no resentment, no chiding, scarce even by the usual female protestation that she would live and die a virgin princess. — Her words have been more courteous than ever, though she knows such rumours are abroad — her actions more gracious —



her looks more kind — nought seems wanting to make me King of England, and place me beyond the storms of court-favour, excepting the putting forth of mine own hand to take that crown imperial, which is the glory of the universe! And when I might stretch that hand out most boldly, it is fettered down by a secret and inextricable bond. — And here I have letters from Amy,” he would say, catching them up with a movement of peevishness, “persecuting me to acknowledge her openly — to do justice to her and to myself — and I wot not what. Methinks I have done less than justice to myself already. And she speaks as if Elizabeth were to receive the knowledge of this matter, with the glee of a mother hearing of the happy marriage of a hopeful son! — She, the daughter of Henry, who spared neither man in his anger, nor woman in his desire, — she to find herself tricked, drawn on with toys of passion to the verge of acknowledging her love to a subject, and he a married man! — Elizabeth to learn that she had been dallied with in such fashion, as a gay courtier might trifle with a country wench — We should then learn *furens quid fœmina!*”

He would then pause, and call for Varney, whose advice was now more frequently resorted to than ever, because the Earl remembered the remonstrances which he had made against his



secret contract. And their consultation usually terminated in anxious deliberation, how, or in what manner, the Countess was to be produced at Kenilworth. These communings had for some time ended always in a resolution to delay the Progress from day to day. But at length a peremptory decision became necessary.

“Elizabeth will not be satisfied without her presence,” said the Earl; “whether any suspicion hath entered her mind, as my own apprehensions suggest, or whether the petition of Tressilian is kept in her memory by Sussex, or some other secret enemy, I know not; but amongst all the favourable expressions which she uses to me, she often recurs to the story of Amy Robsart. I think that Amy is the slave in the chariot, who is placed there by my evil fortune to dash and to confound my triumph, even when at the highest. Shew me thy device, Varney, for solving the inextricable difficulty. I have thrown every such impediment in the way of these accursed revels, as I could propound even with a shade of decency, but to-day’s interview has put all to a hazard. She said to me kindly, but peremptorily, ‘We will give you no farther time for preparations, my lord, lest you should altogether ruin yourself. On Saturday, the 9th of July, we will be with you at Kenilworth — We pray you to forget none of our appointed guests



and suitors, and in especial this light-o'-love, Amy Robsart. We would wish to see the woman who could postpone yonder poetical gentleman, Master Tressilian, to your man, Richard Varney.' — Now, Varney, ply thine invention, whose forge hath availed us so often; for sure as my name is Dudley, the danger menaced by my horoscope is now darkening around me."

"Can my lady be by no means persuaded to bear for a brief space the obscure character which circumstances impose on her?" said Varney, after some hesitation.

"How, sirrah; my Countess term herself *thy* wife! — that may neither stand with my honour nor with her's."

"Alas! my lord," answered Varney, "and yet such is the quality in which Elizabeth now holds her; and to contradict this opinion is to discover all."

"Think of something else, Varney," said the Earl, in great agitation; "this invention is naught — if I could give way to it, she would not; for I tell thee, Varney, if thou know'st it not, that not Elizabeth on the throne has more pride than the daughter of this obscure gentleman of Devon. She is flexible in many things, but where she holds her honour brought in question, she hath a spirit and temper as apprehensive as lightning, and as swift in execution."



“We have experienced that, my lord, else had we not been thus circumstanced,” said Varney. “But what else to suggest I know not — Methinks she who gives rise to the danger, should do somewhat towards parrying it.”

“It is impossible,” said the Earl, waving his hand; “I know neither authority nor entreaties would make her endure thy name for an hour.”

“It is somewhat hard though,” said Varney, in a dry tone; and, without pausing on that topic, he added, “Suppose some one were found to represent her? Such feats have been performed in the courts of as sharp-eyed monarchs as Queen Elizabeth.”

“Utter madness, Varney,” answered the Earl; “the counterfeit would be confronted with Tressilian, and discovery become inevitable.”

“Tressilian might be removed from court,” said the unhesitating Varney.

“And by what means?”

“There are many,” said Varney, “by which a statesman in your situation, my lord, may remove from the scene one who pries into your affairs, and places himself in perilous opposition to you.”

“Speak not to me of such policy, Varney,” said the Earl, hastily; “which, besides, would avail nothing in the present case. Many others may be at court, to whom Amy may be known;



and besides, on the absence of Tressilian, her father or some of her friends would be instantly summoned hither. Urge thine invention once more."

"My lord, I know not what to say," answered Varney; "but were I myself in such perplexity, I would ride post down to Cumnor Place, and compel my wife to give her consent to such measures as her safety and mine required."

"Varney," said Leicester, "I cannot urge her to aught so repugnant to her noble nature, as a share in this stratagem — it would be a base requital to the love she bears me."

"Well, my lord," said Varney, "your lordship is a wise and an honourable man, and skilled in those high points of romantic scruple, which are current in Arcadia, perhaps, as your nephew, Philip Sidney, writes. I am your humble servitor — a man of this world, and only happy that my knowledge of it, and its ways, is such as your lordship has not scorned to avail yourself of. Now I would fain know, whether the obligation lies on my lady or on you, in this fortunate union; and which has most reason to shew complaisance to the other, and to consider that other's wishes, conveniencies, and safety?"

"I tell thee, Varney," said the Earl, "that all it was in my power to bestow upon her,



was not merely deserved, but a thousand times overpaid, by her own virtue and beauty; for never did greatness descend upon a creature so formed by nature to grace and adorn it."

"It is well, my lord, you are so satisfied," answered Varney, with his usual Sardonic smile, which even respect to his patron could not all time subdue — "you will have time enough to enjoy undisturbed the society of one so gracious and beautiful — that is, so soon as such confinement in the Tower be over, as may correspond to the crime of deceiving the affection of Elizabeth Tudor — A cheaper penalty, I presume, you do not expect."

"Malicious fiend!" answered Leicester, "do you mock me in my misfortune? — Manage it as thou wilt."

"If you are serious, my lord," said Varney, "you must set forth instantly, and post for Cumnor Place."

"Do thou go thyself, Varney; the devil has given thee that sort of eloquence, which is most powerful in the worst cause. I should stand self-convicted of villainy, were I to urge such a deceit. — Begone, I tell thee — Must I entreat thee to mine own dishonour?"

"No, my lord," said Varney — "but if you are serious in entrusting me with the task of urging this most necessary measure, you must



give me a letter to my lady, as my credentials, and trust to me for backing the advice it contains with all the force in my power. And such is my opinion of my lady's love for your lordship, and of her willingness to do that which is at once to contribute to your pleasure and your safety, that I am sure she will condescend to bear, for a few brief days, the name of so humble a man as myself, especially since it is not inferior in antiquity to that of her own paternal house."

Leicester seized on writing materials, and twice or thrice commenced a letter to the Countess, which he afterwards tore into fragments. At length he finished a few distracted lines, in which he conjured her, for reasons nearly concerning his life and honour, to consent to bear the name of Varney for a few days, during the revels at Kenilworth. He added, that Varney would communicate all the reasons which rendered this deception indispensable; and having signed and sealed these credentials, he flung then over the table to Varney, with a motion that he should depart, which his adviser was not slow to comprehend and to obey.

Leicester remained like one stupified, till he heard the trampling of the horses, as Varney, who took no time even to change his dress, threw himself into the saddle, and, followed by a single



servant, set off for Berkshire. At the sound, the Earl started from his seat, and ran to the window, with the momentary purpose of recalling the unworthy commission with which he had entrusted one, of whom he used to say, he knew no virtuous property save affection to his patron. But Varney was already beyond call — and the bright starry firmament, which the age considered as the Book of Fate, lying spread before Leicester when he opened the casement, diverted him from his better and more manly purpose.

“There they roll, on their silent but potential course,” said the Earl, looking around him, “without a voice which speaks to our ear, but with influences which affect, at every change, the indwellers, of this vile earthly planet. This, if astrologers fable not, is the very crisis of my fate! The hour approaches, of which I was taught to beware — the hour, too, which I was encouraged to hope for. — A King was the word — but how? — the crown matrimonial — all hopes of that are gone — let them go. The rich Netherlands have demanded me for their leader, and, would Elizabeth consent, would yield to me *their* crown. — And have I not such a claim, even in this kingdom? That of York, descending from George of Clarence to the House of Huntingdon, which, this lady failing, may have a



fair chance — Huntingdon is of my house. — But I will plunge no deeper in these high mysteries. Let me hold my course in silence for a while, and in obscurity, like a subterranean river — the time shall come that I will burst forth in my strength, and bear all opposition before me.”

While Leicester was thus stupifying the remonstrances of his own conscience, by appealing to political necessity for his apology, or losing himself amidst the wild dreams of ambition, his agent left town and tower behind him, on his hasty journey to Berkshire. *He* also nourished high hope. He had brought Lord Leicester to the point which he had desired, of committing to him the most intimate recesses of his breast, and of using him as the channel of his most confidential intercourse with his lady. Henceforward it would, he foresaw, be difficult for his patron either to dispense with his services, or refuse his requests, however unreasonable. And if this disdainful dame, as he termed the Countess, should comply with the request of her husband, Varney, her pretended husband, must needs become so situated with respect to her, that there was no knowing where his audacity might be bounded, perhaps not till circumstances enabled him to obtain a triumph, which he thought of with a mixture of fiendish feelings, in which revenge for her previous scorn



was foremost and predominant. Again he contemplated the possibility of her being totally intractable, and refusing obstinately to play the part assigned to her in the drama at Kenilworth.

“Alasco must then do his part,” he said — “Sickness must serve her Majesty as an excuse for not receiving the homage of Mrs. Varney — ay, and a sore and a wasting sickness it may prove, should Elizabeth continue to cast so favourable an eye on my Lord of Leicester. I will not forego the chance of being favourite of a monarch for want of determined measures, should these be necessary. — Forward, good horse, forward — ambition, and haughty hope of power, pleasure, and revenge, strike their stings as deep through my bosom as I plunge the rowels in thy flanks — On, good horse, on — the devil urges us both forward.”



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## CHAPTER XXII.

*Say that my beauty was but small,  
Among court ladies all despised;  
Why didst thou rend it from that hall,  
Where, scornful Earl, 'twas dearly prized?*

*No more thou comest with wonted speed,  
Thy once beloved bride to see;  
But be she alive or be she dead,  
I fear, stern Earl, 's the same to thee.*

*Cumnor-Hall, by William Julius Mickle.*

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THE ladies of fashion of the present, or of any other period, must have allowed, that the young and lovely Countess of Leicester had, besides her youth and beauty, two qualities which entitled her to a place amongst women of rank and distinction. She displayed, as we have seen in her interview with the pedlar, a liberal promp-



titude to make unnecessary purchases, solely for the pleasure of acquiring useless and showy trifles which ceased to please as soon as they were possessed; and she was, besides, apt to spend a considerable space of time every day in adorning her person, although the varied splendour of her attire could only attract the half satirical praise of the precise Janet, or an approving glance from the bright eyes which witnessed their own beams of triumph reflected from the mirror.

The Countess Amy had, indeed, to plead for indulgence in those frivolous tastes, that the education of the times had done little or nothing for a mind naturally gay and averse to study. If she had not loved to collect finery and to wear it, she might have woven tapestry or sewed embroidery, till her labours spread in gay profusion all over the walls and seats at Lidcote Hall; or she might have varied Minerva's labours with the task of preparing a mighty pudding against the time that Sir Hugh Robsart returned from the greenwood. But Amy had no natural genius either for the loom, the needle, or the receipt-book. Her mother had died in infancy; her father contradicted her in nothing; and Tressilian, the only one who approached her, that was able or desirous to attend to the cultivation of her mind, had much hurt his interest



with her, by assuming too eagerly the task of a preceptor; so that he was regarded by the lively, indulged, and idle girl, with some fear and much respect; but with little or nothing of that softer emotion which it had been his hope and his ambition to inspire. And thus her heart lay readily open, and her fancy became easily captivated by the noble exterior and graceful deportment, and complacent flattery of Leicester, even before he was known to her as the dazzling minion of wealth and power.

The frequent visits of Leicester at Cumnor, during the earlier part of their union, had reconciled the Countess to the solitude and privacy to which she was condemned; but when these visits became rarer and more rare, and when the void was filled up with letters of excuse, not always very warmly expressed, and generally extremely brief, discontent and suspicion began to haunt those splendid apartments which love had fitted up for beauty. Her answers to Leicester conveyed these feelings too bluntly, and pressed more naturally than prudently that she might be relieved from this obscure and secluded residence, by the Earl's acknowledgment of their marriage; and in arranging her arguments with all the skill she was mistress of, she trusted chiefly to the warmth of the entreaties with which she urged them. Sometimes she even ventured



to mingle reproaches, of which Leicester conceived he had good reason to complain.

“I have made her Countess,” he said to Varney, “surely she might wait till it consisted with my pleasure that she should put on a coronet.”

The Countess Amy viewed the subject in directly an opposite light.

“What signifies,” she said, “that I have rank and honour in reality, if I am to live an obscure prisoner, without either society or observance, and suffering in my character, as one of dubious or disgraced reputation? I care not for all those strings of pearl, which you fret me by warping into my tresses, Janet. I tell you, that at Lidcote-Hall, if I put but a fresh rose-bud among my hair, my good father would call me to him, that he might see it more closely; and the kind old curate would smile, and Master Mumblazen would say something about roses gules; and now I sit here, decked out like an image with gold and gems, and no one to see my finery but you, Janet. There was the poor Tressilian too — but it avails not speaking of him.”

“It doth not, indeed, madam,” said her prudent attendant; “and verily you make me sometimes wish you would not speak of him so often, or so rashly.”

“It signifies nothing to warn me, Janet — I was born free, though I am now mewed up like



some fine foreign slave, rather than the wife of an English noble. I bore it all with pleasure while I was sure he loved me; but now, my tongue and heart shall be free, let them fetter my limbs as they will. — I tell thee, Janet, I love my husband — I will love him till my latest breath — I cannot cease to love him, even if I would, or if he — which, God knows, may chance — should cease to love me. But I will say, and loudly, I would have been happier than I now am, to have remained in Lidcote-Hall; even although I must have married poor Tressilian, with his melancholy look; and his head full of learning, which I cared not for. He said if I would read his favourite volumes, there would come a time that I should be glad of it — I think it is come now.”

“I bought you some books, madam,” said Janet, “from a lame fellow who sold them in the Market-place — and who stared something boldly at me, I promise you.”

“Let me see them, Janet,” said the Countess; “but let them not be of your own precise cast. — How is this, most righteous damsel? — ‘*A Pair of Snuffers for the Golden Candlestick*’ — ‘*1 Handful of Myrrh and Hissop to put a Sick Soul to Purgation*’ — ‘*A Draught of Water from the Valley of Baca*’ — ‘*Foxes and Firebrands*’ — What gear call you this, maiden?”



“Nay, madam,” said Janet, “it was but fitting and seemly to put grace in your ladyship’s way; but an you will none of it, there are playbooks, and poet-books, I trow.”

The Countess proceeded carelessly in her examination, turning over such rare volumes as would now make the fortune of twenty retail booksellers. Here was a “*Boke of Cookery*, imprinted by Richard Lant,” and “*Skelton’s Books*” — “*The Passtime of the People*” — “*The Castle of Knowledge*,” etc. But neither to this lore did the Countess’s heart incline, and joyfully did she start up from the listless task of turning over the leaves of the pamphlets, and hastily did she scatter them through the floor, when the hasty clatter of horse’s feet, heard in the court-yard, called her to the window, exclaiming, “It is Leicester! it is my noble Earl! — it is my Dudley! Every stroke of his horse’s hoof sounds like a note of lordly music!”

There was a brief bustle in the mansion, and Foster, with his downward look and sullen manner, entered the apartment to say, “That Master Richard Varney was arrived from my lord, having ridden all night, and craved to speak with her ladyship instantly.”

“Varney? — and to speak with me? — pshaw! — But he comes with news from Leicester — so admit him instantly.”



Varney entered her dressing apartment, where she sat arrayed in her native loveliness, adorned with all that Janet's art, and a rich and tasteful undress, could bestow. But the most beautiful part of her attire was her beautiful and luxuriant lightbrown locks, which floated in such rich abundance around a neck that resembled a swan's, and over a bosom heaving with anxious expectation, which communicated a hurried tinge of red to her whole countenance.

Varney entered the room in the dress in which he had waited on his master that morning to court, the splendour of which made a strange contrast with the disorder arising from hasty riding, during a dark night and foul ways. His brow bore an anxious and hurried expression, as one who has that to say of which he doubts the reception, and who hath yet posted on from the necessity of communicating his tidings. The Countess's anxious eye at once caught the alarm, as she exclaimed, "You bring news from my lord, Master Varney — Gracious Heaven, is he ill?"

"No, madam, thank Heaven!" said Varney. "Compose yourself, and permit me to take breath ere I communicate my tidings."

"No breath, sir," replied the lady, impatiently; "I know your theatrical arts. Since your breath hath sufficed to bring you hither, it



may suffice to tell your tale, at least briefly, and in the gross."

"Madam," answered Varney, "we are not alone, and my lord's message was for your ear only."

"Leave us, Janet, and Master Foster," said the lady; "but remain in the next apartment, and within call."

Foster and his daughter retired, agreeably to the Lady Leicester's commands, into the next apartment, which was the withdrawing-room. The door which led from the sleeping-chamber was then carefully shut and bolted, and the father and daughter remained both in a posture of anxious attention, the first with a stern, suspicious, anxious cast of countenance, and Janet with folded hands, and looks which seemed divided betwixt her desire to know the fortunes of her mistress, and her prayers to Heaven for her safety. Anthony Foster seemed himself to have some idea of what was passing through his daughter's mind, for he crossed the apartment and took her anxiously by the hand, saying, "That is right — pray, Janet, pray — we have all need of prayers, and some of us more than others. Pray Janet — I would pray myself, but I must listen to what goes on within — evil has been brewing, love — evil has been brew-



ing. God forgive our sins, but Varney's sudden and strange arrival bodes us no good."

Janet had never before heard her father excite or even permit her attention to any thing which passed in their mysterious family, and now that he did so, his voice sounded in her ear — she knew not why — like that of a screech-owl denouncing some deed of terror and of woe. She turned her eyes fearfully towards the door, almost as if she expected some sounds of horror to be heard, or some sight of fear to display itself.

All, however, was as still as death, and the voices of those who spoke in the inner chamber, were, if they spoke at all, carefully subdued to a tone which could not be heard in the next. At once, however, they were heard to speak fast, thick, and hastily; and presently after the voice of the Countess was heard exclaiming, at the highest pitch to which indignation could raise it, "Undo the door, sir, I command you! — Undo the door! — I will have no other reply!" she continued, drowning with her vehement accents the low and muttered sounds which Varney was heard to utter betwixt whiles. "What ho! without there!" she persisted, accompanying her words with shrieks, "Janet, alarm the house! — Foster, break open the door — I am



detained here by a traitor! — Use axe and lever, Master Foster — I will be your warrant!”

“It shall not need, madam,” Varney was at length distinctly heard to say. “If you please to expose my lord’s important concerns and your own to the general ear, I will not be your hindrance.”

The door was unlocked and thrown open, and Janet and her father rushed in, anxious to learn the cause of these reiterated exclamations.

When they entered the apartment, Varney stood by the door grinding his teeth, with an expression in which rage, and shame, and fear, had each their share. The Countess stood in the midst of her apartment like a juvenile Pytho-ness, under the influence of the prophetic fury. The veins in her beautiful forehead started into swoln blue lines through the hurried impulse of her articulation — her cheek and neck glowed like scarlet — her eyes were like those of an imprisoned eagle, flashing red lightning on the foes whom it cannot reach with its talons. Were it possible for one of the Graces to have been animated by a Fury, the countenance could not have united such beauty with so much hatred, scorn, defiance, and resentment. The gesture and attitude corresponded with the voice and looks, and altogether presented a spectacle which was at once beautiful and fearful; so much of



the sublime had the energy of passion united with the Countess Amy's natural loveliness. Janet, as soon as the door was open, ran to her mistress; and more slowly, yet with more haste than he was wont, Anthony Foster went to Richard Varney.

"In the Truth's name, what ails your ladyship?" said the former.

"What, in the name of Satan, have you done to her?" said Foster to his friend.

"Who, I? — nothing," answered Varney, but with sunken head and sullen voice; "nothing but communicated to her lord's commands, which, if the lady list not to obey, she knows better how to answer it than I may pretend to do."

"Now, by Heaven, Janet!" said the Countess, "the false traitor lies in his throat! He must needs lie, for he speaks to the dishonour of my noble lord — he must needs lie doubly, for he speaks to gain ends of his own, equally execrable and unattainable."

"You have misapprehended me, lady," said Varney, with a sulky species of submission and apology; "let this matter rest till your passion be abated, and I will explain all."

"Thou shalt never have an opportunity to do so," said the Countess. — "Look at him, Janet. He is fairly dressed, hath the outside of a



gentleman, and hither he came to persuade me it was my lord's pleasure — nay, more, my wedded lord's commands, that I should go with him to Kenilworth, and before the Queen and nobles, and in presence of my own wedded lord, that I should acknowledge him — *him* there — that very cloak-brushing, shoe-cleaning fellow — *him* there, my lord's lacquey, for my liege lord and husband; furnishing against myself, great God! whenever I was to claim my right and my rank, such weapons as would hew my just claim from the root, and destroy my character to be regarded as an honourable matron of the English nobility!"

"You hear her, Foster, and you, young maiden, hear this lady," answered Varney, taking advantage of the pause which the Countess had made in her charge, more for lack of breath than for lack of matter — "You hear that her heat only objects to me the course which our good lord, for the purpose to keep certain matters secret, suggests in the very letter which she holds in her hands."

Foster here attempted to interfere with a face of authority, which he thought became the charge entrusted to him, "Nay, lady, I must needs say you are hasty in this — Such deceit is not utterly to be condemned when practised for a righteous end; and thus even the patriarch Abra-



ham feigned Sarah to be his sister when they went down to Egypt."

"Ay, sir," answered the Countess; "but God rebuked that deceit even in the father of his chosen people, by the mouth of the heathen Pharaoh. Out upon you, that will read Scripture only to copy those things, which are held out to us as warnings, not as examples!"

"But Sarah disputed not the will of her husband, an it be your pleasure," said Foster, in reply; "but did as Araham commanded, calling herself his sister, that it might be well with her husband for her sake, and that his soul might live because of her beauty."

"Now, so Heaven pardon me my useless anger," answered the Countess, "thou art as daring a hypocrite as yonder fellow is an impudent deceiver. Never will I believe that the noble Dudley gave countenance to so dastardly, so dishonourable a plan. Thus I tread on his infamy, if his indeed it be, and thus destroy its remembrance for ever!"

So saying, she tore in pieces Leicester's letter, and stamped, in the extremity of impatience, as if she would have annihilated the minute fragments into which she had rent it.

"Bear witness," said Varney, collecting himself, "she has torn my lord's letter, in order to burthen me with the scheme of his devising;



and although it promises nought but danger and trouble to me, she would lay it to my charge, as if I had any purpose of mine own in it."

"Thou liest, thou treacherous slave!" said Countess Amy, in spite of Janet's attempts to keep her silent, in the sad foresight that her vehemence might only furnish arms against herself. "Thou liest," she continued — "Let me go, Janet — Were it the last word I have to speak, he lies — he had his own foul ends to seek; and broader he would have displayed them, had my passion permitted me to preserve the silence which at first encouraged him to unfold his vile projects."

"Madam," said Varney, overwhelmed in spite of his effrontery, "I entreat you to believe yourself mistaken."

"As soon will I believe light darkness. Have I drank of oblivion? Do I not remember former passages, which, known to Leicester, had given thee the preferment of a gallows, instead of the honour of his intimacy. — I would I were a man but for five minutes! It were space enough to make a craven like thee confess his villainy. But go — begone — Tell thy master, that when I take the foul course to which such scandalous deceits as thou hast recommended on his behalf must necessarily lead me, I will give him a rival something worthy of the name. He shall



not be supplanted by an ignominious lacquey, whose best fortune is to catch his master's last suit of clothes ere it is thread-bare, and who is only fit to seduce a suburb-wench by the bravery of new roses in his master's old pantofles. Go, begone, sir — I scorn thee so much, that I am ashamed to have been angry with thee."

Varney left the room with a mute expression of rage, and was followed by Foster, whose apprehension, naturally slow, was overpowered by the eager and abundant discharge of indignation, which, for the first time, he had heard burst from the lips of a being, who had seemed till that moment too languid, and too gentle, to nurse an angry thought, or utter an intemperate expression. Foster, therefore, pursued Varney from place to place, persecuting him with interrogatories, to which the other replied not, until they were in the opposite side of the quadrangle, and in the old library; with which the reader has already been made acquainted. Here he turned round on his persevering follower, and thus addressed him, in a tone tolerably equal; that brief walk having been sufficient to give one so habituated to command his temper, time to rally and recover his presence of mind.

"Tony," he said, with his usual sneering laugh, "it avails not to deny it. The Woman



and the Devil, who, as thine oracle Holdforth will confirm to thee, cheated man at the beginning, have this day proved more powerful than my discretion. You termagant looked so tempting, and had the art to preserve her countenance so naturally, while I communicated my lord's message, that, by my faith, I thought I might say some little thing for myself. She thinks she hath my head under her girdle now, but she is deceived. — Where is Doctor Alasco?"

"In his laboratory," answered Foster; "it is the hour he is not spoken withal — we must wait till noon is past, or spoil his important — What said I important? — I would say interrupt his divine studies."

"Ay, he studies the devil's divinity," said Varney, — "but when I want him, one hour must suffice as well as another. Lead the way to his pandæmonium."

So spoke Varney, and with hasty and preturbed steps followed Foster, who conducted him through private passages, many of which were well nigh ruinous, to the opposite side of the quadrangle, where, in a subterranean apartment, now occupied by the chemist Alasco, one of the Abbots of Abingdon, who had a turn for the occult sciences, had, much to the scandal of his convent, established a laboratory, in which, like other fools of the time, he spent much pre-



cious time, and money besides, in the pursuit of the grand arcanum.

Anthony Foster paused before the door, which was scrupulously secured within, and again shewed a marked hesitation to disturb the sage in his operations. But Varney, less scrupulous, roused him, by knocking and voice, until at length, slowly and reluctantly, the inmate of the apartment undid the door. The chemist appeared, with his eyes bleared with the heat and vapours of the stove or alembic over which he brooded, and the interior of his cell displayed the confused assemblage of heterogeneous substances, and extraordinary implements, belonging to his profession. The old man was muttering, with spiteful impatience, "Am I for ever to be recalled to the affairs of earth from those of heaven?"

"To the affairs of hell," answered Varney, "for that is thy proper element. — Foster, we need thee at our conference."

Foster slowly entered the room. Varney, following, barred the door, and they betook themselves to secret council.

In the meanwhile, the Countess traversed the apartment, with shame and anger contending on her lovely cheek.

"The villain," she said, "the cold-blooded calculating slave! — But I unmasked him, Ja-



net — I made the snake uncoil all his folds before me, and crawl abroad in his naked deformity — I suspended my resentment, at the danger of suffocating under the effort, until he had let me see the very bottom of a heart more foul than hell's darkest corner. — And thou, Leicester, is it possible thou couldst bid me for a moment deny my wedded right in thee, or thyself yield it to another? But it is impossible — the villain has lied in all. — Janet, I will not remain here longer — I fear him — I fear thy father — I grieve to say it, Janet — but I fear thy father, and, worst of all, this odious Varney. I will escape from Cumnor.”

“Alas! madam, whither would you fly, or by what means will you escape from these walls?”

“I know not, Janet,” said the unfortunate young lady, looking upwards, and clasping her hands together, “I know not where I shall fly, or by what means; but I am certain the God I have served will not abandon me in this dreadful crisis, for I am in the hands of wicked men.”

“Do not think so, dear lady,” said Janet; “my father is stern and strict in his temper, and severely true to his trust — but yet” —

At this moment, Anthony Foster entered the apartment, bearing in his hand a glass cup, and



a small flask. His manner was singular; for, while approaching the Countess with the respect due to her rank, he had till this time suffered to become visible, or had been unable to suppress, the obdurate sulkiness of his natural disposition, which, as is usual with those of his unhappy temper, was chiefly exerted towards those over whom circumstances gave him controul. But at present he shewed nothing of that sullen consciousness of authority which he was wont to conceal under a clumsy affectation of civility and deference, as a ruffian hides his pistols and bludgeon under his ill-fashioned gaberdine. And yet it seemed as if his smile was more in fear than in courtesy, and as if, while he pressed the Countess to taste of the choice cordial, which should refresh her spirits after her late alarm, he was conscious of meditating some farther injury. His hand trembled also, his voice faltered, and his whole outward behaviour exhibited so much that was suspicious, that his daughter Janet, after she had stood looking at him in astonishment for some seconds, seemed at once to collect herself to execute some hardy resolution, raised her head, assumed an attitude and gait of determination and authority, and walking slowly betwixt her father and her mistress, took the salver from the hand of the former, and said in a low, but



marked and decided tone, « Father, I will fill for my noble mistress, when such is her pleasure.”

« Thou, my child ? ” said Foster, eagerly and apprehensively; « no, my child — if is not thou shalt render the lady this service.”

« And why, I pray you,” said Janet, « if it be fitting that the noble lady should partake of the cup at all ? ”

« Why — why,” said the seneschal, hesitating, and then bursting into passion, as the readiest mode of supplying the lack of all other reason — « Why, because it is my pleasure, minion, that you should not — Get you gone to the evening lecture.”

« Now, as I hope to hear lecture again,” replied Janet, « I will not go thither this night, unless I am better assured of my mistress’ safety. Give me that flask, father;” — and she took it from his reluctant hand, while he resigned it as if conscience-struck — « And now,” she said, « father, that which shall benefit my mistress, cannot do *me* prejudice. Father, I drink to you.”

Foster, without speaking a word, rushed on his daughter and wrested the flask from her hand; then, as if embarrassed by what he had done, and totally unable to resolve what he should do next, he stood with it in his hand,



one foot advanced and the other drawn back, glaring on his daughter with a countenance, in which rage, fear, and convicted villainy, formed a hideous combination.

“This is strange, my father,” said Janet, keeping her eye fixed on his, in the manner in which those who have the charge of lunatics are said to overawe their unhappy patients; “will you neither let me serve my lady, nor drink to her myself?”

The courage of the Countess sustained her through this dreadful scene, of which the import was not the less obvious that it was not even hinted at. She preserved even the rash carelessness of her temper, and though her cheek had grown pale at the first alarm, her eye was calm and almost scornful. “Will *you* taste this rare cordial, Master Foster? Perhaps you will not yourself refuse to pledge us, though you permit not Janet to do so — Drink, sir, I pray you.”

“I will not,” answered Foster.

“And for whom, then, is the precious beverage reserved, sir?” said the Countess.

“For the devil, who brewed it,” answered Foster; and, turning on his heel, he left the chamber.



Janet looked at her mistress with a countenance expressive in the highest degree of shame, dismay, and sorrow.

“Do not weep for me, Janet,” said the Countess, kindly.

“No, madam,” replied her attendant, in a voice broken by sobs, “it is not for you I weep, it is for myself — it is for that unhappy man. Those who are dishonoured before man — those who are condemned by God, have cause to mourn — not those who are innocent! — Farewell, madam!” she said, hastily assuming the mantle in which she was wont to go abroad.

“Do you leave me, Janet?” said her mistress — “desert me in such an evil strait?”

“Desert you, madam!” exclaimed Janet; and, running back to her mistress, she imprinted a thousand kisses on her hand — “desert you! — may the Hope of my trust desert me when I do so! — No, madam; well you said the God you serve will open you a path for deliverance. There is a way of escape; I have prayed night and day for light, that I might see how to act betwixt my duty to yonder unhappy man, and that which I owe to you. Sternly and fearfully that light has now dawned, and I must not shut the door which God opens. — Ask me no more. I will return in brief space.”



So speaking, she wrapped herself in her mantle, and saying to the old woman whom she passed in the outer room, that she was going to evening prayer, she left the house.

Meanwhile her father had reached once more the laboratory, where he found the accomplices of his intended guilt.

“Has the sweet bird sipped?” said Varney, with half a smile; while the astrologer put the same question with his eyes, but spoke not a word.

“She has not, nor she shall not from my hands,” replied Foster; “would you have me do murder in my daughter’s presence?”

“Wert thou not told, thou sullen and yet faint-hearted slave,” answered Varney with bitterness, “that no *murder*, as thou call’st it, with that staring look and stammering tone, is designed in the matter? Wert thou not told, that a brief illness, such as woman puts on in very wantonness, that she may wear her night-gear at noon, and lie on a settle when she should mind her domestic business, is all here aimed at? Here is a learned man will swear it to thee by the key of the Castle of Wisdom.”

“I swear it,” said Alasco, “that the elixir thou hast there in the flask will not prejudice life! I swear it by that immortal and indestructible quintessence of gold, which pervades every sub-



stance in nature, though its secret existence can be traced by him only, to whom Tresmigistus renders the key of the Cabala."

"An oath of force," said Varney. "Foster, thou wert worse than a pagan to disbelieve it. Believe me, moreover, who swear by nothing but my own word, that if you be not conformable, there is no hope, no, not a glimpse of hope, that this thy leasehold may be transmuted into a copyhold. Thus, Alasco will leave your pewter artillery untransmigrated, and I, honest Anthony, will still have thee for my tenant."

"I know not, gentlemen," said Foster, "where your designs tend to; but in one thing I am bound up, — that, fall back fall edge, I will have one in this place that may pray for me, and that one shall be my daughter. I have lived ill, and the world has been too weighty with me; but she is as innocent as ever she was when on her mother's lap, and she, at least, shall have her portion in that happy City, whose walls are of pure gold, and the foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones."

"Ay, Tony," said Varney, "that were a paradise to thy heart's content. — Debate the matter with him, Doctor Alasco; I will be with you anon."

So speaking, Varney arose, and, taking the flask from the table, he left the room.



“I tell thee, my son,” said Alasco to Foster, as soon as Varney had left them, “that whatever this bold and profligate railer may say of the mighty science, in which, by heaven’s blessing, I have advanced so far, that I would not call the wisest of living artists my better or my teacher — I say, howsoever yonder reprobate may scoff at things too holy to be apprehended by men merely of carnal and evil thoughts, yet believe, that the city beheld by St John, in that bright vision of the Christian Apocalypse, that New Jerusalem, of which all Christian men hope to partake, sets forth typically the discovery of the GRAND SECRET, whereby the most precious and perfect of nature’s works are elicited out of her basest and most crude productions; just as the light and gaudy butterfly, the most beautiful child of the summer’s breeze, breaks forth from the dungeon of a sordid chrysalis.”

“Master Holdforth said nought of this exposition,” said Foster, doubtfully; “and moreover, Doctor Alasco, the Holy Writ says, that the gold and precious stones of the Holy City are in no sort for those who work abomination, or who frame lies.”

“Well, my son,” said the Doctor, “and what is your inference from thence?”



“That those,” said Foster, “who distil poisons, and administer them in secrecy, can have no portion in those unspeakable riches.”

“You are to distinguish, my son,” replied the alchemist, “betwixt that which is necessarily evil in its progress and in its end also, and that which being evil, is, nevertheless, capable of working forth good. If, by the death of one person, the happy period shall be brought nearer to us, in which all that is good shall be attained, by wishing its presence — all that is evil escaped, by desiring its absence — in which sickness, and pain, and sorrow, shall be the obedient servants of human wisdom, and made to fly at the slightest signal of a sage, — in which that which is now richest and rarest shall be within the compass of every one who shall be obedient to the voice of wisdom, — when the art of healing shall be lost and absorbed in the one universal medicine, — when sages shall become monarchs of the earth, and death itself retreat before their crown, — if this blessed consummation of all things can be hastened by the slight circumstance, that a frail earthly body, which must needs partake corruption, shall be consigned to the grave a short space earlier than in the course of nature, what is such a sacrifice to the advancement of the holy Millenium?”



“Millenium is the reign of the Saints,” said Foster, somewhat doubtfully.

“Say it is the reign of the Sages, my son,” answered Alasco; “or rather the reign of Wisdom itself.”

“I touched on the question with Master Holdforth last exercising night,” said Foster; “but he says your doctrine is heterodox, and a damnable and false exposition.”

“He is in the bonds of ignorance, my son,” answered Alasco, “and as yet burning bricks in Egypt; or, at best, wandering in the dry desert of Sinai. Thou didst ill to speak to such a man of such matters. I will, however, give thee proof, and that shortly, which I will defy that peevish divine to confute, though he should strive with me as the magicians strove with Moses before King Pharaoh. I will do projection in thy presence, my son, — in thy very presence, — and thine eyes shall witness the truth.”

“Stick to that, learned sage,” said Varney, who at this moment entered the apartment; “if he refuse the testimony of thy tongue, yet how shall he deny that of his own eyes?”

“Varney!” said the adept — “Varney already returned! Hast thou” — he stopped short.

“Have I done mine errand, thou wouldst say,” replied Varney — “I have! — And thou,”



he added, shewing more symptoms of interest than he had hitherto exhibited, «art thou sure thou hast poured forth neither more nor less than the just measure?»

«Ay,” replied the alchemist, «as sure as men can be in these nice proportions; for there is diversity of constitutions.”

«Nay, then,” said Varney, «I fear nothing. I know thou wilt not go a step farther to the devil than thou art justly considered for. Thou wert paid to create illness, and would esteem it thriftless prodigality to do murther at the same price. Come, let us each to our chamber — We shall see the event to-morrow.”

«What didst thou do to make her swallow it?” said Foster, shuddering.

«Nothing,” answered Varney, «but looked on her with that aspect which governs madmen, women, and children. They told me, in Saint Luke’s Hospital, that I have the right look for overpowering a refractory patient. The keepers made me their compliments on’t; so I know how to win my bread, when my court-favour fails me.”

«And art thou not afraid,” said Foster, «lest the dose be disproportioned?”

«If so,” replied Varney, «she will but sleep the sounder, and the fear of that shall not break my rest. Good night, my masters.”



Anthony Foster groaned heavily, and lifted up his hands and eyes. The alchemist intimated his purpose to continue some experiment of high import during the greater part of the night, and the others separated to their places of repose.



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### CHAPTER XXIII.

*Now God be good to me in this wild pilgrimage!*

*All hope in human aid I cast behind me.*

*Oh, who would be a woman? — who that fool,*

*A weeping, pining, faithful, loving woman?*

*She hath hard measure still where she hopes kindest,*

*And all her bounties only make ingrates.*

#### Love's Pilgrimage.

THE summer evening was closed, and Jane, just when her longer stay might have occasioned suspicion and inquiry in that jealous household, returned to Cumnor-Place, and hastened to the apartment in which she had left her lady. She found her with her head resting on her arms, and these crossed upon a table which stood before her. As Janet came in, she neither looked up nor stirred.



Her faithful attendant ran to her mistress with the speed of lightning, and rousing her at the same time with her hand, conjured the Countess in the most earnest manner to look up, and say what thus affected her. The unhappy lady raised her head accordingly, and looking on her attendant with a ghastly eye, and cheek as pale as clay, "Janet," she said, "I have drank it."

"God be praised!" said Janet, hastily — "I mean God be praised that it is no worse — the potion will not harm you. — Rise, shake this lethargy from your limbs, and this despair from your mind."

"Janet," repeated the Countess again, "disturb me not — leave me at peace — let life pass quietly — I am poisoned."

"You are not, my dearest lady," answered the maiden eagerly — "What you have swallowed cannot injure you, and I hastened hither to tell you that the means of escape are open to you."

"Escape!" exclaimed the lady, as she raised herself hastily in her chair, while light returned to her eye and life to her cheek; "but ah! Janet, it comes too late."

"Not so, dearest lady — Rise, take mine arm, walk through the apartment — Let not fancy do the work of poison! — So; feel you not now that you are possessed of the full use of your limbs?"



“The torpor seems to diminish,” said the Countess, as, supported by Janet, she walked to and fro in the apartment; “but is it then so, and have I not swallowed a deadly draught? Varney was here since thou wert gone, and commanded me, with eyes in which I read my fate, to swallow yon horrible drug. O, Janet! it must be fatal; never was harmless draught served by such a cup-bearer!”

“He did not deem it harmless, I fear,” replied the maiden; “but God confounds the devices of the wicked. Believe me, as I swear by the dear Gospel in which we trust, your life is safe from his practice. Did you not debate with him?”

“The house was silent,” answered the lady — “thou gone — no other but he in the chamber — and he capable of every crime. I did but stipulate he would remove his hateful presence, and I drank whatever he offered. — But you spoke of escape, Janet; can I be so happy?”

“Are you strong enough to bear the tidings, and make the effort?”

“Strong!” answered the Countess — “Ask the hind, when the fangs of the deer-hound are stretched to gripe her, if she is strong enough to spring the chasm. I am equal to every effort that may relieve me from this place.”



“Hear me then,” said Janet. “One whom I deem an assured friend of yours, has shewn himself to me in various disguises, and sought speech of me, which, — for my mind was not clear on the matter until this evening, — I have ever declined. He was the pedlar who brought you goods — the itinerant hawker who sold me books — whenever I stirred abroad I was sure to see him. The event of this night determined me to speak with him. He waits even now at the postern-gate of the park with means for your flight. — But have you strength of body? — Have you courage of mind? — Can you undertake the enterprize?”

“She that flies from death,” said the lady, “finds strength of body — she that would escape from shame, lacks no strength of mind. The thoughts of leaving behind me the villain who menaces both my life and honour, would give me strength to rise from my death-bed.”

“In God’s name then, lady,” said Janet, “I must bid you adieu, and to God’s charge I must commit you.”

“Will you not fly with me then, Janet?” said the Countess, anxiously — “Am I to lose thee? Is this thy faithful service?”

“Lady, I would fly with you as willingly as bird ever fled from cage, but my doing so would occasion instant discovery and pursuit. I must



remain, and use means to disguise the truth for some time — May heaven pardon the falsehood, because of the necessity!”

“And am I then to travel alone with this stranger?” said the lady — “Bethink thee, Janet, may not this prove some deeper and darker scheme to separate me perhaps from you, who are my only friend?”

“No, madam, do not suppose it,” answered Janet, readily; “the youth is an honest youth in his purpose to you; and a friend to Master Tressilian, under whose direction he is come hither.”

“If he be a friend of Tressilian,” said the Countess, “I will commit myself to his charge, as to that of an angel sent from heaven; for than Tressilian, never breathed mortal man more free of whatever was base, false, or selfish. He forgot himself whenever he could be of use to others — Alas! and how was he requited!”

With eager haste they collected the few necessities which it was thought proper the Countess should take with her, and which Janet, with speed and dexterity, formed into a small bundle, not forgetting to add such ornaments of intrinsic value as came most readily in her way, and particularly a casket of jewels, which she wisely judged might prove of service in some future emergency. The Countess of Leicester next



changed her dress for one which Janet usually wore upon any brief journey, for they judged it necessary to avoid every external distinction which might attract attention. Ere these preparations were fully made, the moon had arisen in the summer heaven, and all in the retired mansion had betaken themselves to rest, or at least to the silence and retirement of their chambers.

There was no difficulty anticipated in escaping, whether from the house or garden, providing only they could elude observation. Anthony Foster had accustomed himself to consider his daughter as a conscious sinner might regard a visible guardian angel, which, notwithstanding his guilt, continued to hover around him, and therefore his trust in her knew no bounds. Janet commanded her own motions during the day-time, and had a master-key which opened the postern-door of the park, so that she could go to the village at pleasure, either upon the household affairs, which were entirely confided to her management, or to attend her devotions at the meeting-house of her sect. It is true, the daughter of Foster was thus liberally entrusted, under the solemn condition that she should not avail herself of these privileges, to do any thing inconsistent with the safekeeping of the Countess; for so her residence at Cumnor-Place had



been termed, since she began of late to exhibit impatience of the restrictions to which she was subjected. Nor is there reason to suppose, that any thing short of the dreadful suspicions which the scene of that evening had excited, could have induced Janet to have violated her word, or deceived her father's confidence. But from what she had witnessed, she now conceived herself not only justified, but imperatively called upon to make her lady's safety the principal object of her care, setting all other considerations aside.

The fugitive Countess with her guide were traversing with hasty steps the broken and interrupted path, which had once been an avenue, now totally darkened by the boughs of spreading trees which met above their head, and now receiving a doubtful and deceiving light from the beams of the moon, which penetrated where the axe had made openings in the wood. Their path was repeatedly interrupted by felled trees, or the large boughs which had been left on the ground till time served to make them into fagots and billets. The inconvenience and difficulty attending these interruptions, the breathless haste of the first part of their route, the exhausting sensations of hope and fear, so much affected the Countess's strength, that Janet was forced to propose that they should pause for a



few minutes to recover breath and spirits. Both therefore stood still beneath the shadow of a huge old gnarled oak-tree, and both naturally looked back to the mansion which they had left behind them, whose long dark front was seen in the gloomy distance, with its huge stalks of chimnies, turrets, and clock-house, rising above the line of the roof, and definedly visible against the pure azure blue of the summer sky. One light only twinkled from the extended and shadowy mass, and it was placed so low that it rather seemed to glimmer from the ground in front of the mansion, than from one of the windows. The Countess's terror was awakened.—  
 “They follow us!” she said, pointing out to Janet the light which thus alarmed her.

Less agitated than her mistress, Janet perceived that the gleam was stationary, and informed the Countess in a whisper, that the light proceeded from the solitary cell in which the alchemist pursued his occult experiments. —  
 “He is of those,” she added, “who sit up and watch by night that they may commit iniquity. Evil was the chance which sent hither a man, whose mixed speech of earthly wealth and unearthly or superhuman knowledge, has in it what does so especially captivate my poor father. Well spoke the good Master Holdforth — and, methought, not without meaning that those of



our household should find therein a practical use. 'There be those,' he said, 'and their number is legion, who will rather, like the wicked Ahab, listen to the dreams of the false prophet Zedechias, than to the words of him by whom the Lord has spoken.' And he further insisted — 'Ah, my brethren, there be many Zedechiases among you — men that promise you the light of their carnal knowledge, so you will surrender to them that of your heavenly understanding. What are they better than the tyrant Naas, who demanded the right eye of those who were subjected to him?' and farther he insisted" —

It is uncertain how long the fair puritan's memory might have supported her in the recapitulation of Master Holdforth's discourse; but the Countess now interrupted her, and assured her she was so much recovered that she could now reach the postern without the necessity of a second delay.

They set out accordingly, and performed the second part of their journey with more deliberation, and of course more easily, than the first hasty commencement. This gave them leisure for reflection; and Janet now, for the first time, ventured to ask her lady, which way she proposed to direct her flight. Receiving no immediate answer, — for perhaps, in the confusion



of her mind, this very obvious subject of deliberation had not occurred to the Countess, — Janet ventured to add, «Probably to your father's house, where you are sure of safety and protection?»

«No, Janet,” said the lady, mournfully, «I left Lidcote-Hall while my heart was light and my name was honourable, and I will not return thither till my lord's permission and public acknowledgment of our marriage restore me to my native home, with all the rank and honour which he has bestowed on me.”

«And whither will you then, madam?» said Janet.

«To Kenilworth, girl,” said the Countess, boldly and freely. «I will see these revels — these princely revels — the preparation for which makes the land ring from side to side. Methinks, when the Queen of England feasts within my husband's halls, the Countess of Leicester should be no unbeseeming guest.”

«I pray God you may be a welcome one,” said Janet hastily.

«You abuse my situation, Janet,” said the Countess angrily, «and you forget your own.”

«I do neither, dearest madam,” said the sorrowful maiden; «but have you forgotten that the noble Earl has given such strict charges to keep your marriage secret, that he may preserve his



court-favour? and can you think that your sudden appearance at his castle, at such a juncture, and in such a presence, will be acceptable to him?"

"Thou thinkest I would disgrace him," said the Countess; — "nay, let go my arm, I can walk without aid, and work without counsel."

"Be not angry with me, lady," said Janet meekly, "and let me still support you; the road is rough, and you are little accustomed to walk in darkness."

"If you deem me not so mean as may disgrace my husband," said the Countess in the same resentful tone, "you suppose my Lord of Leicester capable of abetting, perhaps of giving aim and authority to the base proceedings of your father and Varney, whose errand I will do to the good Earl."

"For God's sake, madam, spare my father in your report," said Janet; "let my services, however poor, be some atonement for his errors."

"I were most unjust, dearest Janet, were it otherwise," said the Countess, resuming at once the fondness and confidence of her manner towards her faithful attendant. "Yes, Janet, not a word of mine shall do your father prejudice. But thou seest, my love, I have no desire but to throw myself on my husband's protection. I have left the abode he assigned for me, because



of the villainy of the persons by whom I was surrounded — but I will disobey his commands in no other particular. I will appeal to him alone — I will be protected by him alone — To no other, than at his pleasure, have I or will I communicate the secret union which combines our hearts and our destinies, I will see him, and receive from his own lips the directions for my future conduct. Do not argue against my resolution, Janet; you will only confirm me in it — And to own the truth, I am resolved to know my fate at once, and from my husband's own mouth, and to seek him at Kenilworth is the surest way to attain my purpose."

While Janet hastily revolved in her mind the difficulties and uncertainties attendant on the unfortunate lady's situation, she was inclined to alter her first opinion, and to think, upon the whole, that since the Countess had withdrawn herself from the retreat in which she had been placed by her husband, it was her first duty to repair to his presence, and possess him with the reasons of such conduct. She knew what importance the Earl attached to the concealment of their marriage, and could not but own, that by taking any step to make it public without his permission, the Countess would incur, in a high degree, the indignation of her husband. If she retired to her father's house without an ex-



plicit avowal of her rank, her situation was likely greatly to prejudice her character, and if she made such an avowal, it might occasion an irreconcilable breach with her husband. At Kenilworth, again, she might plead her cause with her husband himself, whom Janet, though distrusting him more than the Countess did, believed incapable of being accessory to the base and desperate means which his dependants, from whose power the lady was now escaping, might resort to, in order to stifle her complaints of the treatment she had received at their hands. But at the worst, and were the Earl himself to deny her justice and protection, still at Kenilworth, if she chose to make her wrongs public, the Countess might have Tressilian for her advocate, and the Queen for her judge, for so much Janet had learned in her short conference with Wayland. She was, therefore, on the whole, reconciled to her lady's proposal of going towards Kenilworth, and so expressed herself; recommending, however, to the Countess the utmost caution in making her arrival known to her husband.

“Hast thou thyself been cautious, Janet?” said the Countess; “this guide, in whom I must put my confidence, hast thou not entrusted to him the secret of my condition?”

“From me he has learned nothing,” said Janet,



“nor do I believe that he knows more than what the public in general believe of your situation.”

“And what is that?” said the lady.

“That you left your father’s house — but I shall offend you again if I go on,” said Janet, interrupting herself.

“Nay, go on,” said the Countess; “I must learn to endure the evil report which my folly has brought upon me. They think, I suppose, that I have left my father’s house to follow lawless pleasure — It is an error which will soon be removed, — indeed it shall, for I will live with spotless fame, or I shall cease to live. — I am accounted, then, the paramour of my Leicester?”

“Most men say of Varney,” said Janet; “yet some call him only the convenient cloak of his master’s pleasures; for reports of the profuse expence in garnishing yonder apartments have secretly gone abroad, and such doings far surpass the means of Varney. But this latter opinion is little prevalent; for men dare hardly even hint suspicion when so high a name is concerned, lest the Star-chamber should punish them for scandal of the nobility.”

“They do well to speak low,” said the Countess, “who would mention the illustrious Dudley as the accomplice of such a wretch as Varney. — We have reached the postern — Ah!



Janet, I must bid thee farewell! — Weep not, my good girl," said she, endeavouring to cover her own reluctance to part with her faithful attendant under an attempt at playfulness, "and against we meet again, reform me, Janet, that precise ruff of thine for an open rabatine of lace and cut work, that will let men see thou hast a fair neck; and that kirtle of Philippine chency, with that bugle lace which befits only a chambermaid, into three-piled velvet and cloth of gold — thou wilt find plenty of stuffs in my chamber, and I freely bestow them on you. Thou must be brave, Janet; for though thou art now but the attendant of a distressed and errant lady, who is both nameless and fameless, yet, when we meet again, thou must be dressed as becomes the gentlewoman nearest in love and in service to the first Countess in England."

"Now, may God grant it, dear lady! — not that I may go with gayer apparel, but that we may both wear our kirtles over lighter hearts."

By this time the lock of the postern-door had, after some hard wrenching, yielded to the masterkey; and the Countess, not without internal shuddering, saw herself beyond the walls which her husband's strict commands had assigned to her as the boundary of her walks. Waiting with much anxiety for their appearance, Wayland



Smith stood at some distance, shrouding himself behind a hedge which bordered the high-road.

“Is all safe?” said Janet to him, anxiously, as he approached them with caution.

“All,” he replied; “but I have been unable to procure a horse for the lady. Giles Gosling, the cowardly hilding, refused me one on any terms; lest, forsooth, he should suffer — but no matter. She must ride on my palfrey, and I must walk by her side until I come by another horse. There will be no pursuit, if you, pretty Mistress Janet, forget not thy lesson.”

“No more than the wise widow of Tekoa forgot the words which Joab put into her mouth,” answered Janet. “To morrow, I say that my lady is unable to rise.”

“Ay, and that she hath aching and heaviness of the head — a throbbing at the heart, and lists not to be disturbed. — Fear not, they will take the hint, and trouble thee with few questions — they understand the disease.”

“But,” said the lady, “my absence must be soon discovered, and they will murther her in revenge. — I will rather return than expose her to such danger.”

“Be at ease on my account, madam,” said Janet; “I would you were as sure of receiving the favour you desire from those to whom you must make appeal, as I am that my father,



however angry, will suffer no harm to befall me."

The Countess was now placed by Wayland upon his horse, around the saddle of which he had placed his cloak, so folded as to make her a commodious seat.

"Adieu, and may the blessing of God wend with you!" said Janet, again kissing her mistress's hand, who returned her benediction with a mute caress. They then tore themselves asunder, and Janet, addressing Wayland, exclaimed, "May Heaven deal with you at your need, as you are true or false to this most injured and most helpless lady!"

"Amen! pretty Janet," replied Wayland; — "and believe me, I will so acquit myself of my trust, as may tempt even your pretty eyes, saint-like as they are, to look less scornfully on me when we next meet."

The latter part of this adieu was whispered into Janet's ear; and, although she made no reply to it directly, yet her manner, influenced no doubt by her desire to leave every motive in force which could operate towards her mistress's safety, did not discourage the hope which Wayland's words expressed. She re-entered the postern-door, and locked it behind her, while Wayland, taking the horse's bridle in his hand,



and walking close by its head, they began in silence their dubious and moonlight journey.

Although Wayland Smith used the utmost dispatch which he could make, yet this mode of travelling was so slow, that when morning began to dawn through the eastern mist, he found himself not farther than about ten miles distant from Cumnor. "Now a plague upon all smooth-spoken hosts!" said Wayland, unable longer to suppress his mortification and uneasiness. "Had the false loon, Giles Gosling, but told me plainly two days since, that I was to reckon nought upon him, I had shifted better for myself. But they have such a custom of promising whatever is called for, that it is not till the steed is to be shod you find they are out of iron. Had I but known, I could have made twenty shifts; nay, for that matter, and in so good a cause, I would have thought little to have prigged a prancer from the next common — it had but been sending back the brute to the Headborough. The farcy and the founders confound every horse in the stables of the Black Bear!"

The lady endeavoured to comfort her guide, observing, that the dawn would enable him to make more speed.

"True, madam," replied he; "but then it will enable other folks to take note of us, and that may prove an ill beginning of our journey."



I had not cared a spark from anvil about the matter, had we been farther advanced on our way. But this Berkshire has been notoriously haunted e'er since I knew the country, with that sort of malicious elves, who sit up late and rise early, for no other purpose than to pry into other folks affairs. I have been endangered by them ere now. But do not fear," he added, "a good madam; for wit, meeting with opportunity, will not miss to find a salve for every sore."

The alarms of her guide made more impression on the Countess's mind than the comfort which he judged fit to administer along with it. She looked anxiously around her, and as the shadows withdrew from the landscape, and the heightening glow of the eastern sky promised the speedy rise of the sun, expected at every turn that the increasing light would expose them to the view of the vengeful pursuers, or present some dangerous and insurmountable obstacle to the prosecution of their journey. Wayland Smith perceived her uneasiness, and, displeased with himself for having given her cause of alarm, strode on with affected alacrity, now talking to the horse as one expert in the language of the stable, now whistling to himself low and interrupted snatches of tunes, and now assuring the lady there was no danger, while at the same time he



looked sharply around to see that there was nothing in sight, which might give the lie to his words while they were issuing from his mouth. Thus did they journey on, until an unexpected incident gave them the means of continuing their pilgrimage with more speed and convenience.



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CHAPTER XXIV.

Richard. *A horse! — a horse! — my kingdom for a horse!*

Catesby. *— — My lord, I'll help you to a horse.*

Richard III.

Our travellers were in the act of passing a small thicket of trees close by the road-side; when the first living being presented himself whom they had seen since their departure from Cumnor-Place. This was a stupid lout, seemingly a farmer's boy, in a grey jerkin, with his head bare, his hose about his heels, and huge startups upon his feet. He held by the bridle what of all things they most wanted, a palfrey, namely, with a side-saddle, and all other garniture for a woman's mounting; and he hailed Wayland Smith with, "Zur, be ye zure the party?"

“Ay, that I be, my lad,” answered Wayland, without an instant’s hesitation; and it must be owned that consciences, trained in a stricter school of morality, might have given way to an occasion so tempting. While he spoke he caught the rein out of the boy’s hand, and almost at the same time helped down the Countess from his own horse, and aided her to mount on that which chance had thus presented for her acceptance. Indeed, so naturally did the whole take place, that the Countess, as it afterwards appeared, never suspected but what the horse had been placed there to meet them by the precaution of the guide or some of his friends.

The lad, however, who was thus hastily dispossessed of his charge, began to stare hard, and scratch his head, as if seized with some qualms of conscience for delivering up the animal on such brief explanation. — “I be right zure thou be’st the party,” said he, muttering to himself, “but thou shouldst ha zaid *Beans*, thou knaw’st.”

“Ay, ay,” said Wayland, speaking at a venture; “and thou *Bacon*, thou know’st.”

“Noa, noa,” said the lad; bide ye — bide ye — it was *Pease* ye should ha said.”

“Well, well,” answered Wayland, “pease be it, a’ God’s name, though bacon were the better password.”

And, being by this time mounted on his own horse, he caught the rein of the palfrey from the uncertain hold of the hesitating young boor, flung him a small piece of money, and made amends for lost time by riding briskly off without farther parley. The lad was still visible from the hill up which they were riding, and Wayland, as he looked back, beheld him standing with his fingers in his hair as immoveable as a guide-post, and his head turned in the direction in which they were escaping from him. At length, just as they topped the hill, he saw the clown stoop to lift up the silver groat which his benevolence had imparted. — “Now this is what I call a Godsend,” said Wayland; “this is a bonny well-riden bit of a going thing, and it will carry us so far till we get you as well mounted, and then we will send it back to satisfy the Hue and Cry.”

But he was deceived in his expectations; and fate, which seemed at first to promise so fairly, soon threatened to turn the incident, which he thus gloried in, into the cause of their utter ruin.

They had not ridden a short mile from the place where they left the lad, before they heard a man's voice shouting on the wind behind them, “Robbery! robbery! — Stop thief!” and similar exclamations, which Wayland's conscience rea-

dily assured him must arise out of the transaction to which he had been just accessory.

“I had better have gone barefoot all my life,” he said; “it is the Hue and Cry, and I am a lost man. Ah! Wayland, Wayland, many a time thy father said horse-flesh would be the death of thee. Were I once safe among the horse-courers in Smithfield, or Turnball Street, they should have leave to hang me as high as St. Paul’s if I e’er meddled more with nobles, knights, or gentlewomen.”

Amidst these dismal reflections, he turned his head repeatedly to see by whom he was chased, and was much comforted when he could only discover a single rider, who was, however, well mounted, and came after them at a speed which left them no chance of escaping, even had the lady’s strength permitted her to ride as fast as her palfrey might have been able to gallop.

“There may be fair play betwixt us sure,” thought Wayland, “where there is but one man on each side, and yonder fellow sits on his horse more like a monkey than a cavalier. Pshaw! if it come to the worst, it will be easy unhorsing him. Nay, ’snails! I think his horse will take the matter in his own hand, for he has the bridle betwixt his teeth. Oons, what care I for him?” said he, as the pursuer drew yet nearer;

“it is but the little animal of a mercer from Abingdon, when all is over.”

Even so it was, as the experienced eye of Wayland had descried at a distance. For the valiant mercer's horse, which was a beast of mettle, feeling himself put to his speed, and discerning a couple of horses riding fast, at some hundred yards distance before him, betook himself to the road with such alacrity, as totally deranged the seat of his rider, who not only came up with, but passed, at full gallop, those whom he had been pursuing, pulling the reins with all his might, and ejaculating, “Stop! stop!” an interjection which seemed rather to regard his own palfrey, than what seamen call “the chase.” With the same involuntary speed, he shot a-head, (to use another nautical phrase) about a furlong, ere he was able to stop and turn his horse, and then rode back towards our travellers, adjusting, as well as he could, his disordered dress, resettling himself in the saddle, and endeavouring to substitute a bold and martial frown, for the confusion and dismay which sate upon his visage during his involuntary career.

Wayland had just time to caution the lady not to be alarmed, adding, “this fellow is a gull, and I will use him as such.”

When the mercer had recovered breath and audacity enough to confront them, he ordered

Wayland, in a menacing tone, to deliver up his palfrey.

“How?” said the smith, in King Cambyzes’ vein, “are we commanded to stand and deliver on the King’s high-way? Then out, Excalibar, and tell this knight of prowess, that dire blows must decide between us.”

“Haro and help, and hue and cry, every true man!” said the mercer, “I am withstood in seeking to recover mine own.”

“Thou swearest thy Gods in vain, foul paynim,” said Wayland, “for I will through with my purpose, were death at the end on’t. Nevertheless, know, thou false man of frail cambric and fer-rateen, that I am he, even the pedlar, whom thou didst boast to meet on Maiden-castle-moor, and despoil of his pack; wherefore betake thee to thy weapons presently.”

“I spoke but in jest, man,” said Goldthred; “I am an honest shopkeeper and citizen, who scorn to leap forth on any man from behind a hedge.”

“Then, by my faith, most puissant mercer, I am sorry for my vow, which was, that wherever I met thee, I would despoil thee of thy palfrey, and bestow it upon my leman, unless thou couldst defend it by blows of force. But the vow is passed and registered — and all I can

do for thee, is to leave the horse at Donnington, in the nearest hostelrie."

"But I tell thee, friend," said the mercer, "it is the very horse on which I was this day to carry Jane Thackham, of Shottesbrok, as far as the parish-church yonder, to become Dame Goldthred. She hath jumped out of the shot-window of old Gaffer Thackham's grange; and lo ye, yonder she stands, at the place where she should have met the palfrey, with her camel-riding-cloak, and ivory-handled whip, like a picture of Lot's wife. I pray you, in good terms, let me have back the palfrey."

"Grieved am I," said Wayland, "as much for the fair damsel, as for thee, most noble imp of muslin. But vows must have their course — thou wilt find the palfrey at the Angel yonder at Donnington. It is all I may do for thee, with a safe conscience."

"To the devil with thy conscience!" said the dismayed mercer — "Would'st thou have a bride walk to church on foot?"

"Thou may'st take her on thy crupper, Sir Goldthred," answered Wayland; "it will take down thy steed's mettle."

"And how if you — if you forget to leave my horse, as you propose?" said Goldthred not without hesitation, for his soul was afraid within him.

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“My pack shall be pledged for it — yonder it lies with Giles Gosling, in his chamber with the damask’d leathern hangings, stuffed full with velvet, single, double, treble-piled — rash-taffeta, and parapa — shag, damask, and mockado, plush, and grogram” — —

“Hold! hold!” exclaimed the mercer; “nay, if there be, in truth and sincerity, but the half of these wares — but if ever I trust bumpkin with bonny Bayard again!”

“As you list for that, good Master Goldthred, and so good morrow to you — and well parted,” he added, riding on cheerfully with the lady, while the discountenanced mercer rode back much slower than he came, pondering what excuse he should make to the disappointed bride, who stood waiting for her gallant groom in the midst of the king’s high-way.

“Methought,” said the lady, “as they rode on, yonder fool stared at me, as if he had some remembrance of me; yet I kept my muffler as high as I might.”

“If I thought so,” said Wayland, “I would ride back, and cut him over the pate — there would be no fear of harming his brains, for he never had so much as would make pap to a sucking gosling. We must now push on, however, and at Donnington we will leave the oaf’s

horse, that he may have no farther temptation to pursue us, and endeavour to assume such a change of shape as may baffle his pursuit, if he should persevere in it."

The travellers reached Donnington without farther alarm, where it became matter of necessity that the Countess should enjoy two or three hours repose, during which Wayland disposed himself, with equal address and alacrity, to carry through those measures on which the safety of their future journey seemed to depend.

Exchanging his pedlar's gaberdine for a smock-frock, he carried the palfrey of Goldthred to the Angel Inn, which was at the other end of the village from that where our travellers had taken up their quarters. In the progress of the morning, as he travelled about his other business, he saw the steed brought forth, and delivered to the cutting mercer himself, who, at the head of a valorous posse of the Hue and Cry, came to rescue by force of arms what was delivered to him without any other ransom than the price of a huge quantity of ale, drunk out by his assistants, thirsty, it would seem, with their walk, and concerning the price of which Master Goldthred had a fierce dispute with the Headborough, whom he had summoned to aid him in raising the country.

Having made this act of prudent, as well as just restitution, Wayland procured such change of apparel for the lady, as well as himself, as gave them both the appearance of country people of the better class; it being farther resolved, that, in order to attract the less observation, she should pass upon the road for the sister of her guide. A good, but not a gay horse, fit to keep pace with his own, and gentle enough for a lady's use, completed the preparations for the journey; for making which, he had been furnished with sufficient funds by Tressilian. And thus, about noon, after the Countess had been refreshed by the sound repose of several hours, they resumed their journey, with the purpose of making the best of their way to Kenilworth, by Coventry and Warwick. They were not, however, destined to travel far, without meeting some cause of apprehension.

It is necessary to premise, that the landlord of the inn had informed them, a jovial party, intended, as he understood, to present some of the masques or mummeries, which made a part of the entertainment with which the Queen was usually welcomed on the royal Progresses, had left the village of Donnington an hour or two before them, in order to proceed to Kenilworth. Now it had occurred to Wayland, that by attaching themselves in some sort to this groupe,

as soon as they should overtake them on the road, they would be less likely to attract notice, than if they continued to travel entirely by themselves. He communicated his idea to the Countess, who, only anxious to arrive at Kenilworth without interruption, left him free to chuse the manner in which this was to be accomplished. They pressed forward their horses, therefore, with the purpose of overtaking the party of intended revellers, and making the journey in their company; and had just seen the little party, consisting partly of riders, partly of people on foot, crossing the summit of a gentle hill, at about half a mile's distance, and disappearing on the other side, when Wayland, who maintained the most circumspect observation of all that met his eye in every direction, was aware that a rider was coming up behind them on a horse of uncommon action, accompanied by a serving man, whose utmost efforts were unable to keep up with his master's trotting hackney, and who, therefore, was fain to follow him at a hand gallop. Wayland looked anxiously back at these horsemen, became considerably disturbed in his manner, looked back again, and became pale, as he said to the lady — «That is Richard Varney's trotting gelding — I would know him among a thousand nags — this is a worse business than meeting the mercer.»

“Draw your sword,” answered the lady, “and pierce my bosom with it, rather than I should fall into his hands.”

“I would rather by a thousand times,” answered Wayland, “pass it through his body, or even mine own. But to say truth, fighting is not my best point, though I can look on cold iron like another, when needs must be. And indeed, as for my sword — (put on I pray you) — it is a poor provant rapier, and I warrant you he has a special Toledo. He has a serving man too, and I think it is the drunken ruffian Lambourne, upon the horse on which men say — (I pray you heartily to put on) — he did the great robbery of the westcountry grazier. It is not that I fear either Varney or Lambourne in a good cause — (your palfrey will go yet faster if you urge him) — But yet — (nay, I pray you let him not break off into the gallop, lest they should see we fear them, and give chace — keep him only at the full trot,) — But yet, though I fear them not, I would we were well rid of them, and that rather by policy than by violence. Could we once reach the party before us, we may herd among them, and pass unobserved, unless Varney be really come in express pursuit of us, and then, happy man be his dole.”

While he thus spoke, he alternately urged

and restrained his horse, desirous to maintain the fleetest pace that was consistent with the idea of an ordinary journey on the road, but to avoid such rapidity of movement as might give rise to suspicion that they were flying.

At such a pace, they ascended the gentle bill we have mentioned, and, looking from the top, had the pleasure to see that the party which had left Donnington before them, were in the little valley or bottom on the other side, where the road was traversed by a rivulet, beside which was a cottage or two. In this place they seemed to have made a pause, which gave Wayland the hope of joining them, and becoming a part of their company, ere Varney should overtake them. He was the more anxious, as his companion, though she made no complaints, and expressed no fear, began to look so deadly pale, that he was afraid she might drop from her horse. Notwithstanding this symptom of decaying strength, she pushed on her palfrey so briskly, that they joined the party in the bottom of the valley, ere Varney appeared on the top of the gentle eminence which they descended.

They found the company to which they meant to associate themselves in great disorder. The women with dishevelled locks, and looks of great importance, ran in and out of one of the cottages, and the men stood around holding the

horses, and looking silly enough, as is usual in cases where their assistance is not wanted.

Wayland and his charge paused, as if out of curiosity, and then gradually, without making any inquiries, or being asked any questions, they mingled with the groupe, as if they had always made part of it.

They had not stood there above five minutes, anxiously keeping as much to the side of the road as possible, so as to place the other travellers betwixt them and Varney, when Lord Leicester's master of the horse, followed by Lambourne, came riding fiercely down the hill, their horses' flanks and the rowels of their spurs shewing bloody tokens of the rate at which they travelled. The appearance of the stationary groupe around the cottages, wearing their buckram suits in order to protect their masquing dresses, having their light cart for transporting their scenery, and carrying various fantastic properties in their hands for the more easy conveyance, let the riders at once into the character and purpose of the company.

"You are revellers," said Varney, "designing for Kenilworth?"

"*Recte quidem, Domine spectatissime,*" answered one of the party.

"And why the devil stand you here," said Varney, "when your utmost dispatch will but

bring you to Kenilworth in time? The Queen dines at Warwick to-morrow, and you loiter here, ye knaves."

"In very truth, sir," said a little diminutive urchin, wearing a vizard with a couple of sprouting horns of an elegant scarlet hue, having moreover a black serge jerkin drawn close to his body by lacing, garnished with red stockings, and shoes so shaped as to resemble cloven feet, — "in very truth, sir, and you are in the right on't. It is my father the Devil, who, being taken in labour, has delayed our present purpose, by increasing our company with an imp too many."

"The devil he has!" answered Varney, whose laugh, however, never exceeded a sarcastic smile.

"It is even as the juvenal hath said," added the masquer who spoke first; "our major devil, for this is but our minor one, is even now at *Lucina fer opem*, within that very *tugurium*."

"By Saint George, or rather by the Dragon, who may be a kinsman of the fiend in the straw, a most comical chance!" said Varney. "How sayest thou, Lambourne, wilt thou stand godfather for the nonce? — if the devil were to chuse a gossip, I know no one more fit for the office."

"Saving always when my betters are in presence," said Lambourne, with the civil impudence

of a servant who knows his services to be so indispensable, that his jest will be permitted to pass muster.

“And what is the name of this devil or devil’s dam, who has timed her turns so strangely?” said Varney. “We can ill afford to spare any of our actors.”

“*Gaudet nomine Sybillae*,” said the first speaker, “she is called Sybill Laneham, wife of Master Richard Laneham” — —

“Clerk to the Council-chamber door,” said Varney; “why she is inexcusable, having had experience how to have ordered her matters better. But who were those, a man and a woman I think, who rode so hastily up the hill before me even now? — do they belong to your company?”

Wayland was about to hazard a reply to this alarming inquiry, when the little diablotin again thrust in his oar.

“So please you,” he said, coming close up to Varney, and speaking so as not to be overheard by his companions, “the man was our devil major, who has tricks enough to supply the lack of a hundred such as Dame Laneham; and the woman — if you please — is the sage person whose assistance is most particularly necessary to our distressed comrade.”

“Oh, what, you have got the wise woman

then?" said Varney. "Why truly, she rode like one bound to a place where she was needed — And you have a spare limb of Satan, besides, to supply the place of Mistress Laneham?"

"Ay, sir," said the boy, "they are not so scarce in this world as your honour's virtuous eminence would suppose — This master-fiend shall spit a few flashes of fire, and eruct a volume or two of smoke on the spot, if it will do you pleasure — you would think he had Aetna in his abdomen."

"I lack time just now, most hopeful imp of darkness, to witness his performance," said Varney; "but here is something for you all to drink the lucky hour — and so, as the play says, 'God be with your labour!'"

Thus speaking, he struck his horse with the spurs, and rode on his way.

Lambourne tarried a moment or two behind his master, and rummaged his pouch for a piece of silver, which he bestowed on the communicative imp, as he said, for his encouragement on his path to the infernal regions, some sparks of whose fire, he said, he could discover flashing from him already. Then having received the boy's thanks for his generosity, he also spurred his horse, and rode after his master as fast as the fire flashes from flint.

“And now,” said the wily imp, sideling close up to Wayland’s horse, and cutting a gambol in the air, which seemed to vindicate his title to relationship with the prince of that element, “I have told them who *you* are, do you in return tell me who *I* am?”

“Either Flibbertigibbet,” answered Wayland Smith, “or else an imp of the devil in good earnest.”

“Thou hast hit it,” answered Dickie Sludge; “I am thine own Flibbertigibbet, man; and I have broken forth of bounds, along with my learned preceptor, as I told thee I would do, whether he would or not. — But what lady hast thou got with thee? I saw thou wert at fault the first question was asked, and so I drew up for thy assistance. But I must know all who she is, dear Wayland.”

“Thou shalt know fifty finer things, my dear ingle,” said Wayland; “but a truce to thine inquiries just now; and since you are bound for Kenilworth, thither will I too, even for the love of thy sweet face and waggish company.”

“Thou should’st have said my waggish face and sweet company,” said Dickie; “but how wilt thou travel with us — I mean in what character?”

“E’en in that thou hast assigned me, to be sure — as a juggler; thou know’st I am used to the craft,” answered Wayland.

“Ay, but the lady?” answered Flibbertigibbet; “credit me, I think she *is* one, and thou art in a sea of troubles about her at this moment, as I can perceive by thy fidgetting.”

“O, she, man! — she is a poor sister of mine,” said Wayland — “she can sing and play o’ the lute, would win the fish out o’ the stream.”

“Let me hear her instantly,” said the boy; “I love the lute rarely; I love it of all things, though I never heard it.”

“Then how canst thou love it, Flibbertigibbet?” said Wayland.

“As knights love ladies in old tales,” answered Dickie — “on hearsay.”

“Then love it on hearsay a little longer, till my sister is recovered from the fatigue of her journey,” said Wayland; — muttering afterwards betwixt his teeth, “The devil take the imp’s curiosity! — I must keep fair weather with him, or we shall fare the worse.”

He then proceeded to state to Master Holiday his own talents as a juggler, with those of his sister as a musician. Some proof of his dexterity was demanded, which he readily gave in such a style of excellence, that, delighted at obtaining such an accession to their party, they readily acquiesced in the apology which he offered, when a display of his sister’s talents was required. The new-comers were invited to partake of the re-

freshments with which the party were provided; and it was with some difficulty that Wayland Smith obtained an opportunity of being apart with his supposed sister during the meal, of which interval he availed himself to entreat her to forget for the present both her rank and her sorrows, and condescend, as the most probable chance of remaining concealed, to mix in the society of those with whom she was to travel.

The Countess allowed the necessity of the case, and when they resumed their journey, endeavoured to comply with her guide's advice, by addressing herself to a female near her, and expressing her concern for the woman whom they were thus obliged to leave behind them.

"O, she is well attended, madam," replied the dame whom she addressed, who, from her jolly and laughter-loving demeanour, might have been the very emblem of the Wife of Bath; "and my gossip Laneham thinks as little of these matters as any one. By the ninth day, an the revels last so long, we shall have her with us at Kenilworth, even if she should travel with her bantling on her back."

There was something in this speech which took away all desire on the Countess of Leicester's part to continue the conversation; but having broken the charm by speaking to her

fellow-traveller first, the good dame, who was to play Rare Gillian of Croydon, in one of the interludes, took care that silence did not again settle on the journey, but entertained her silent companion with a thousand anecdotes of revels, from the days of King Harry downwards, with the reception given them by the great folks, and all the names of those who played the principal characters; but ever concluding with "they would be nothing to the princely pleasures of Kenilworth."

"And when shall we reach Kenilworth?" said the Countess, with an agitation which she in vain attempted to conceal.

"We that have horses may, with late riding, get to Warwick to-night, and Kenilworth may be distant some four or five miles, — but then we must wait till the foot-people come up; although it is like my good Lord of Leicester will have horses or light carriages to meet them, and bring them up without being travel-toiled, which last is no good preparation, as you may suppose, for dancing before your betters — And yet, Lord help me, I have seen the day I would have tramped five leagues of lea-land, and turned on my toe the whole evening after, as a juggler spins a pewter platter on the point of a needle. But age has clawed me somewhat

in his clutch, as the song says: though, if I like the tune and like my partner, I'll dance the heys yet with any merry lass in Warwickshire, that writes that unhappy figure four with a round O after it."

If the Countess was overwhelmed with the garrulity of this good dame, Wayland Smith, on his part, had enough to do to sustain and parry the constant attacks made upon him by the indefatigable curiosity of his old acquaintance Richard Sludge. Nature had given that arch youngster a prying cast of disposition, which matched admirably with his sharp wit; the former inducing him to plant himself as a spy on other people's affairs, and the latter quality leading him perpetually to interfere, after he had made himself master of that which concerned him not. He spent the livelong day in attempting to peer under the Countess's muffler, and apparently what he could there discern greatly sharpened his curiosity.

"That sister of thine, Wayland," he said, has a fair neck to have been born in a smithy, and a pretty taper hand to have been used for twirling a spindle — faith, I'll believe in your relationship when the crow's egg is hatched into a cygnet."

“Go to,” said Wayland, “thou art a prating boy, and should be breeched for thine assurance.”

“Well,” said the imp, drawing off, all I say is, — remember you have kept a secret from me! and if I give thee not a Rowland for thine Oliver, my name is not Dickon Sludge.”

This threat, and the distance at which Hobgoblin kept from him for the rest of the way, alarmed Wayland very much, and he suggested to his pretended sister, that, on pretext of weariness, she should express a desire to stop two or three miles short of the fair town of Warwick, promising to rejoin the troop in the morning. A small village inn afforded them a resting-place; and it was with secret pleasure that Wayland saw the whole party, including Dickon, pass on, after a courteous farewell, and leave them behind.

“To-morrow, madam,” he said to his charge, “we will, with your leave, again start early, and reach Kenilworth before the rout which are to assemble there.”

The Countess gave assent to the proposal of her faithful guide; but, somewhat to his surprise, said nothing farther on the subject, which left Wayland under the disagreeable uncertainty whether or no she had formed any plan for her

own future proceedings, as he knew her situation demanded circumspection, although he was but imperfectly acquainted with all its peculiarities. Concluding, however, that she must have friends within the castle, whose advice and assistance she could safely trust, he supposed his task would be best accomplished by conducting her thither in safety, agreeably to her repeated commands. ✱

CHAPTER XXV.

*Hark, the bells summon, and the bugle calls,
But she the fairest answers not — the tide
Of nobles and of ladies throngs the halls,
But she the loveliest must in secret hide.
What eyes were thine, proud Prince, which in
the gleam
Of you gay meteors lost that better sense,
That o'er the glow-worm doth the star esteem,
And merit's modest blush o'er courtly insolence?*

The Glass Slipper.

THE unfortunate Countess of Leicester had, from her infancy upwards, been treated by those around her with indulgence as unbounded as injudicious. The natural sweetness of her disposition had saved her from becoming insolent and ill-humoured; but the caprice which preferred the handsome and insinuating Leicester before

Tressilian, of whose high honour and unalterable affection she herself entertained so firm an opinion — that fatal error, which ruined the happiness of her life, had its origin in the mistaken kindness that had spared her childhood the painful, but most necessary lesson, of submission and self-command. From the same indulgence, it followed that she had only been accustomed to form and to express her wishes, leaving to others the task of fulfilling them; and thus, at the most momentous period of her life, she was alike destitute of presence of mind, and of ability to form for herself any reasonable or prudent plan of conduct.

These difficulties pressed on the unfortunate lady with overwhelming force, on the morning which seemed to be the crisis of her fate. Overlooking every intermediate consideration, she had only desired to be at Kenilworth, and to approach her husband's presence; and now, when she was in the vicinity of both, a thousand considerations arose at once upon her mind, startling her with accumulated doubts and dangers, some real, some imaginary, and all exalted and exaggerated by a situation alike helpless, and destitute of aid and counsel.

A sleepless night rendered her so weak in the morning, that she was altogether unable to at-

tend Wayland's early summons. The trusty guide became extremely distressed on the lady's account, and somewhat alarmed on his own, and was on the point of going alone to Kenilworth, in the hope of discovering Tressilian, and intimating to him the lady's approach, when about nine in the morning he was summoned to attend her. He found her dressed, and ready for resuming her journey, but with a paleness of countenance which alarmed him for her health. She intimated her desire that the horses might be got instantly ready, and resisted with impatience her guide's request, that she would take some refreshment before setting forward. "I have had," she said, "a cup of water — the wretch who is dragged to execution needs no stronger cordial, and that may serve me which suffices for him — do as I command you." Wayland Smith still hesitated. "What would you have?" said she — "Have I not spoken plainly?"

"Yes, madam," answered Wayland; "but may I ask what is your farther purpose? — I only wish to know, that I may guide myself by your wishes. The whole country is afloat, and streaming towards the Castle of Kenilworth. It will be difficult travelling thither, even if we

had the necessary passports for safe-conduct and free-admittance — Unknown and unfriended, we may come by mishap. — Your ladyship will forgive my speaking my poor mind — Were we not better try to find out the masquers, and again join ourselves with them?" — The Countess shook her head, and her guide proceeded, "Then I see but one other remedy."

"Speak out, then," said the lady, not displeased, perhaps, that he should thus offer the advice which she was ashamed to ask; "I believe thee faithful — what wouldst thou counsel?"

"That I should warn Master Tressilian," said Wayland, "that you are in this place. I am right certain he would get to horse with a few of Lord Sussex's followers, and ensure your personal safety."

"And is it to *me* you advise," said the Countess, "to put myself under the protection of Sussex, the unworthy rival of the noble Leicester?" Then, seeing the surprise with which Wayland stared upon her, and afraid of having too strongly intimated her interest in Leicester, she added, "And for Tressilian, it must not be — mention not to him, I charge you, my unhappy name; it would but double *my* misfor-

tunes, and involve *him* in dangers beyond the power of rescue." She paused; but when she observed that Wayland continued to look on her with that anxious and uncertain gaze, which indicated a doubt whether her brain was settled, she assumed an air of composure, and added, "Do thou but guide me to Kenilworth Castle, good fellow, and thy task is ended, since I will then judge what farther is to be done. Thou hast yet been true to me — here is something that will make thee rich amends."

She offered the artist a ring, containing a valuable stone. Wayland looked at it, hesitated a moment, and then returned it. "Not," he said, "that I am above your kindness, madam, being but a poor fellow, who have been forced, God help me! to live by worse shifts than the bounty of such a person as you. But as my old master the farrier used to say to his customers, 'No cure no pay.' We are not yet in Kenilworth Castle, and it is time enough to discharge your guide, as they say, when you take your boots off. I trust in God your ladyship is as well assured of fitting reception when you arrive, as you may hold yourself certain of my best endeavours to conduct you thither safely. I go to get the horses; meantime let me pray

you once more, as your poor physician as well as guide, to take some sustenance."

"I will — I will," said the lady, hastily. "Begone, begone instantly! — It is in vain I assume audacity," said she when he left the room; "even this poor groom sees through my affectation of courage, and fathoms the very ground of my fears."

She then attempted to follow her guide's advice by taking some food, but was compelled to desist, as the effort to swallow even a single morsel gave her so much uneasiness as amounted well nigh to suffocation. A moment afterwards the horses appeared at the latticed window — the lady mounted, and found that relief from the free air and change of place, which is frequently experienced in similar circumstances.

It chanced well for the Countess's purpose that Wayland Smith, whose previous wandering and unsettled life had made him acquainted with almost all England, was intimate with all the bye-roads, as well as direct communications, through the beautiful county of Warwick. For such and so great was the throng which flocked

in all directions towards Kenilworth, to see the entry of Elizabeth into that splendid mansion of her prime favourite, that the principal roads were actually blockaded and interrupted, and it was only by circuitous bye-paths that the travellers could proceed on their journey.

The Queen's purveyors had been abroad, sweeping the farms and villages of those articles usually exacted during a royal Progress, and for which the owners were afterwards to obtain a tardy payment from the Board of Green Cloth. The Earl of Leicester's household officers had been scouring the country for the same purpose; and many of his friends and allies, both near and remote, took this opportunity of ingratiating themselves, by sending large quantities of provisions and delicacies of all kinds, with game in huge quantities, and whole tons of the best liquors, foreign and domestic. Thus the high roads were filled with droves of bullocks, sheep, and calves and hogs, and choked with loaded wains, whose axle-trees cracked under their burdens of wine-casks and hogsheads of ale, and huge hampers of grocery goods, and slaughtered game, and salted provision, and sacks of flour. Perpetual stoppages took place as these wains became entangled; and their rude drivers, swearing and brawling till their wild

passions were fully raised, began to debate precedence with their waggon-whips and quarter-staves, which occasional riots were usually quieted by a purveyor, deputy-marshal's-man, or some other person in authority, breaking the heads of both parties.

Here were, besides, players and mummers, jugglers and showmen of every description, traversing in joyous bands the paths which led to the Palace of Princely Pleasure; for so the travelling minstrels had termed Kenilworth in the songs which already had come forth in anticipation of the revels which were there expected. In the midst of this motley show, mendicants were exhibiting their real or pretended miseries, forming a strange, though common, contrast betwixt the vanities and the sorrows of human existence. All these floated along with the immense tide of population, whom mere curiosity had drawn together; and where the mechanic, in his leathern apron, elbowed the dink and dainty dame, his city mistress; where clowns, with hob-nailed shoes, were treading on the kibes of substantial burghers and gentlemen of worship; and where Joan of the dairy, with robust pace, and red sturdy arms, rowed her way onward, amongst those prim and pretty moppets, whose sires were knights and squires.

The throng and confusion was, however, of a gay and cheerful character. All came forth to see and to enjoy, and all laughed at the trifling inconveniencies which at another time might have chafed their temper. Excepting the occasional brawls which we have mentioned amongst that irritable race the carmen, the mingled sounds which arose from the multitude were those of light-hearted mirth, and tiptoe jollity. The musicians preluded on their instruments — the minstrels hummed their songs — the licensed jester whooped betwixt mirth and madness, as he brandished his bauble — the morrice-dancers jangled their bells — the rustics halloo'd and whistled — men laughed loud, and maidens giggled shrill; while many a broad jest flew like a shuttle-cock from one party to be caught in the air and returned from the opposite side of the road by another, at which it was aimed.

No infliction can be so distressing to a mind absorbed in melancholy, as being plunged into a scene of mirth and revelry, forming an accompaniment so dissonant from its own feelings. Yet, in the case of the Countess of Leicester, the noise and tumult of this giddy scene distracted her thoughts, and rendered her this sad service, that it became impossible for her to

brood on her own misery, or to form terrible anticipations of her approaching fate. She travelled on, like one in a dream, following implicitly the guidance of Wayland, who, with great address, now threaded his way through the general throng of passengers, now stood still until a favourable opportunity occurred of again moving forward, and frequently turning altogether out of the direct road, followed some circuitous by-path, which brought them into the high road again, after having given them the opportunity of traversing a considerable way with greater ease and rapidity.

It was thus he avoided Warwick, within whose Castle (that fairest monument of ancient and chivalrous splendour which yet remains uninjured by time) Elizabeth had passed the previous night, and where she was to tarry until past noon, at that time the general hour of dinner throughout England, after which repast she was to proceed to Kenilworth. In the meanwhile, each passing groupe had something to say in the Sovereign's praise, though not absolutely without the usual mixture of satire which qualifies more or less our estimate of our neighbours, especially if they chance to be also our betters.

“Heard you,” said one, “how graciously she spoke to Master Bailiff and the Recorder, and to good Master Griffin the preacher, as they kneeled down at her coach-window?”

“Ay, and how she said to little Aglionby ‘Master Recorder, men would have persuaded me that you were afraid of me, but truly I think, so well did you reckon up to me the virtues of a sovereign, that I have more reason to be afraid of you’ — And then with what grace she took the fair-wrought purse with the twenty gold sovereigns, seeming as though she would not willingly handle it, and yet taking it withal.”

“Ay, ay,” said another, “her fingers closed on it pretty willingly methought, when all was done; and methought, too, she weighed them for a second in her hand, as she would say, I hope they be avoir-du-pois.”

“She needed not, neighbour,” said a third; “it is only when the corporation pay the accounts of a poor handicraft like me, that they put him off with clipt coin. — Well, there is a God above all — Little Master Recorder, since that is the word, will be greater now than ever.”

“Come, good neighbour,” said the first speaker, “be not envious — She is a good Queen, and a generous — She gave the purse to the Earl of Leicester.”

“I envious? — beshrew thy heart for the word!” replied the handicraft — “But she will give all to the Earl of Leicester anon, methinks.”

“You are turning ill, lady,” said Wayland Smith to the Countess of Leicester, and proposed that she should draw off from the road, and halt till she recovered. But, subduing her feelings at this, and different speeches to the same purpose, which caught her ear as they passed on, she insisted that her guide should proceed to Kenilworth with all the haste which the numerous impediments of their journey permitted. Meanwhile, Wayland’s anxiety at her repeated fits of indisposition, and her obvious distraction of mind, was hourly increasing, and he became extremely desirous, that, according to her reiterated requests, she should be safely introduced into the Castle, where, he doubted not, she was secure of a kind reception, though she seemed unwilling to reveal on whom she reposed her hopes.

“An I were once rid of this peril,” thought he, “and if any man shall find me playing squire

of the body to a damosel-errant, he shall have leave to beat my brains out with my own sledge-hammer."

At length the princely Castle appeared, upon improving which, and the domains around, the Earl of Leicester had, it is said, expended sixty thousand pounds sterling, a sum equal to half a million of our present money.

The outer wall of this splendid and gigantic structure enclosed seven acres, a part of which was occupied by extensive stables, and by a pleasure garden, with its trim arbours and parterres, and the rest formed the large base-court, or outer yard, of the noble Castle. The lordly structure itself, which rose near the centre of this spacious enclosure, was composed of a huge pile of magnificent castellated buildings, apparently of different ages, surrounding an inner court, and bearing in the names attached to each portion of the magnificent mass, and in the armorial bearings which were there blazoned, the emblems of mighty chiefs who had long passed away, and whose history, could Ambition have lent ear to it, might have read a lesson to the haughty favourite, who had now acquired and was augmenting the fair domain. A large and massive Keep, which formed the citadel of the

Castle, was of uncertain though great antiquity. It bore the name of Cæsar, perhaps from its resemblance to that in the Tower of London so called. Some antiquaries ascribed its foundation to the time of Kenelph, from whom the Castle had its name, a Saxon King of Mercia, and others to an early æra after the Norman Conquest. On the exterior walls frowned the scutcheon of the Clintons, by whom they were founded in the reign of Henry I., and of the yet more redoubted Simon de Montfort, by whom, during the Barons' Wars, Kenilworth was long held out against Henry III. Here Mortimer, Earl of March, famous alike for his rise and his fall, had once gaily revelled, while his dethroned sovereign, Edward II., languished in its dungeons. Old John of Gaunt, "time-honoured Lancaster," had widely extended the Castle, erecting that noble and massive pile which yet bears the name of Lancaster's Buildings; and Leicester himself had outdone the former possessors, princely and powerful as they were, by erecting another immense structure, which now lies crushed under its own ruins, the monument of its owner's ambition. The external wall of this royal Castle was, on the south and west sides, adorned and defended by a lake partly artificial, across which Leicester had constructed a stately bridge, that Elizabeth might enter the Castle by a path hitherto

untrodden, instead of the usual entrance to the northward, over which he had erected a gate-house or barbican, which still exists, and is equal in extent and superior in architecture, to the baronial castle of many a northern chief.

Beyond the lake lay an extensive chase, full of red deer, fallow deer, roes, and every species of game, and abounding with lofty trees, from amongst which the extended front and massive towers of the castle were seen to rise in majesty and beauty. We cannot but add, that of this lordly palace, where princess feasted and heroes fought, now in the bloody earnest for storm and siege, and now in the games of chivalry, where beauty dealt the prize which valour won, all is now desolate. The bed of the lake is but a rushy swamp; and the massive ruins of the Castle only serve to shew what their splendour once was, and to impress on the musing visitor the transitory value of human possessions, and the happiness of those who enjoy a humble lot in virtuous contentment.

It was with far different feelings that the unfortunate Countess of Leicester viewed those grey and massive towers, when she first beheld them rise above the embowering and richly shaded woods, over which they seemed to preside. She,

the undoubted wife of the great Earl, of Elizabeth's minion, and England's mighty favourite, was approaching the presence of her husband, and that husband's sovereign, under the protection, rather than the guidance, of a poor juggler; and though unquestioned Mistress of that proud Castle, whose lightest word ought to have had force sufficient to make its grates leap from their massive hinges to receive her, yet she could not conceal from herself the difficulty and peril which she must experience in gaining admission into her own halls.

The risk and difficulty, indeed, seemed to increase every moment, and at length threatened altogether to put a stop to her farther progress, at the great gate leading to a broad and fair road, which, traversing the breadth of the Chase for the space of two miles, and commanding several most beautiful views of the Castle and lake, terminated at the newly constructed bridge, to which it was an appendage, and which was destined to form the Queen's approach to the Castle on that memorable occasion.

Here the Countess and Wayland found the gate at the end of this avenue, which opened on the Warwick road, guarded by a body of the Queen's mounted yeomen of the guard,

armed in corslets richly carved and gilded, and wearing morions instead of bonnets, having their carabines resting with the butt-end on their thighs. These guards, who did duty wherever the Queen went in person, were here stationed under the direction of a pursuivant, graced with the Bear and Ragged Staff on his arm, as belonging to the Earl of Leicester, and peremptorily refused all admittance, excepting to such as were guests invited to the festival, or persons who were to perform some part in the mirthful exhibitions which were proposed.

The press was of consequence great around the entrance, and persons of all kinds presented every sort of plea for admittance; to which the guards turned an inexorable ear, pleading, in return to fair words and even to fair offers, the strictness of their orders, founded on the Queen's wellknown dislike to the rude pressing of a multitude. With those whom such reasons did not serve, they dealt more rudely, repelling them without ceremony by the pressure of their powerful barbed horses, and good round blows from the stock of their carabines. These last manœuvres produced undulations amongst the crowd, which rendered Wayland much afraid that he might perforce be separated from his charge in the throng. Neither did he know what excuse

to make in order to obtain admittance, and he was debating the matter in his head with great uncertainty, when the Earl's pursuivant having cast an eye upon him, exclaimed, to his no small surprise, "Yeomen, make room for the fellow in the orange-tawny cloak — Come forward, Sir Coxcomb, and make haste. What, in the fiend's name, has kept you waiting? Come forward with your bale of woman's gear."

While the pursuivant gave Wayland this pressing yet uncourteous invitation, which, for a minute or two, he could not imagine was applied to him, the yeomen speedily made a free passage for him, while only cautioning his companion to keep the muffler close around her face, he entered the gate leading her palfrey, but with such a drooping crest, and such a look of conscious fear and anxiety, that the crowd, not greatly pleased at any rate with the preference bestowed upon them, accompanied their admission with hooting, and a loud laugh of derision.

Admitted thus within the chace, though with no very flattering notice or distinction, Wayland and his charge rode forward, musing what difficulties it would be next their lot to encounter, through the broad avenue, which was centinelled on either side by a long line of retainers, armed

with swords and partizans, richly dressed in the Earl of Leicester's liveries, and bearing his cognizance of the Bear and Ragged Staff, each placed within three paces of each other, so as to line the whole road from the entrance into the park to the bridge. And, indeed, when the lady obtained the first commanding view of the Castle, with its stately towers rising from within a long sweeping line of outward walls, ornamented with battlements, and turrets, and platforms, at every point of defence, with many a banner streaming from its walls, and such a bustle of gay crests, and waving plumes, disposed on the terraces and battlements and all the gay and gorgeous scene, her heart, unaccustomed to such splendour, sank as if it died within her, and for a moment she asked herself, what she had offered up to Leicester to deserve to become the partner of this princely splendour. But her pride and generous spirit resisted the whisper which bade her despair.

“I have given him,” she said, “all that woman has to give. Name and fame, heart and hand, have I given the lord of all this magnificence at the altar, and England's Queen could give him no more. He is my husband — I am his wife — Whom God hath joined, man cannot sunder. I will be bold in claiming my right;

even the bolder, that I come thus unexpected, and thus forlorn. I know my noble Dudley well! He will be something impatient at my disobeying him, but Amy will weep, and Dudley will forgive her."

These meditations were interrupted by a cry of surprise from her guide Wayland, who suddenly felt himself grasped firmly round the body by a pair of long thin black arms, belonging to some one who had dropped himself out of an oak tree, upon the croupe of his horse, amidst the shouts of laughter which burst from the sentinels.

"This must be the devil, or Flibbertigibbet again!" said Wayland, after a vain struggle to disengage himself, and unhorse the urchin who clang to him; "Do Kenilworth oaks bear such acorns?"

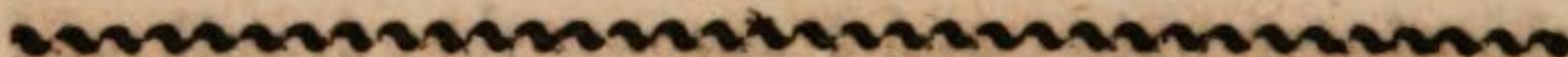
"In sooth do they, Master Wayland," said his unexpected adjunct, "and many others, too hard for you to crack, for as old as you are, without my teaching you. How would you have passed the pursuivant at the upper gate yonder, had not I warned him our principal juggler was to follow us? and here have I waited for you, having clambered up into the tree from the

top of our wain, and I suppose they are all mad for want of me by this time."

"Nay, then, thou art a limb of the devil in good earnest," said Wayland. "I give thee way, good imp, and will walk by thy counsel; only as thou art powerful be merciful."

As he spoke, they approached a strong tower, at the south extremity of the long bridge we have mentioned, which served to protect the outer gateway of the castle of Kenilworth.

Under such disastrous circumstances, and in such singular company, did the unfortunate Countess of Leicester approach, for the first time, the magnificent abode of her almost princely husband.



CHAPTER XXVI.

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? pray, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quince. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Midsummer - Night's Dream.

WHEN the Countess of Leicester arrived at the outer gate of the Castle of Kenilworth, she found the tower, beneath which its ample portal arch opened, guarded in a singular manner. Upon the battlements were placed gigantic warders, with clubs, battle-axes, and other implements of ancient warfare, designed to represent the soldiers of King Arthur; those primitive Britons, by whom, according to romantic tradition, the Castle had been first tenanted, though history carried back its antiquity only to the times of

the Heptarchy. Some of these tremendous figures were real men, dressed up with vizards and buskins; others were mere pageants composed of paste-board and buckram, which, viewed from beneath, formed a sufficiently striking representation of what was intended. But the gigantic porter who waited at the gate beneath, and actually discharged the duties of warder, owed none of his terrors to fictitious means. He was a man whose huge stature, thewes, sinews, and bulk in proportion, would have enabled him to enact Colbrand, Ascapart, or any other giant of romance, without raising himself nearer to heaven even by the altitude of a chopin. The legs and knees of this son of Anak were bare, as were his arms from a span below the shoulder; but his feet were defended with sandals, fastened with cross straps of scarlet leather, studded with brazen knobs. A close jerkin of scarlet velvet, looped with gold, with short breeches of the same, covered his body and a part of his limbs; and he wore on his shoulders, instead of a cloak, the skin of a black bear. The head of this formidable person was uncovered, excepting by his shaggy black hair, which descended on either side around features of that huge, lumpish, and heavy cast, which are often annexed to men of very uncommon size, and which, notwithstanding some distinguished exceptions, have created

a general prejudice against giants, as being a dull and sullen kind of persons. This tremendous warder was appropriately armed with a heavy club, spiked with steel. In fine, he represented excellently one of these giants of popular romance, who figure in every fairy tale, or legend of knight-errantry.

The demeanour of this modern Titan, when Wayland Smith bent his attention to him, had in it something arguing much mental embarrassment and vexation; for sometimes he sat down for an instant on a massive stone bench, which seemed placed for his accommodation beside the gate-way, and then ever and anon he started up, scratching his huge head, and striding to and fro on his post, like one under a fit of impatience and anxiety. It was while the porter was pacing before the gate in this agitated manner, that Wayland, modestly, yet as a matter of course, (not however without some mental misgiving,) was about to pass him, and enter the portal arch. The porter, however, stopped his progress, bidding him, in a thundering voice, "Stand back!" and enforcing his injunction by heaving up his steelshod mace, and dashing it on the ground before Wayland's horse's nose with such vehemence, that the pavement flashed fire, and the arch-way rang to the clamour.

Wayland, availing himself of Dickie's hint, began to state that he belonged to a band of performers to which his presence was indispensable, that he had been accidentally detained behind, and much to the same purpose. But the warder was inexorable, and kept muttering and murmuring something betwixt his teeth, which Wayland could make little of; and addressing betwixt whiles a refusal of admittance, couched in language which was but too intelligible. A specimen of his speech might run thus. — "What, how now, my masters? (to himself) — Here's a stir — here's a coil. — (Then to Wayland) — You are a loitering knave, and shall have no entrance — (Again to himself,) — Here's a throng — here's a thrusting. — I shall ne'er get through with it — Here's a — humph — ha — (To Wayland) Back from the gate, or I'll break the pate of thee — (Once more to himself) — Here's a — no — I shall never get through it."

"Stand still," whispered Flibbertigibbet into Wayland's ear, "I know where the shoe pinches, and will tame him in an instant."

He dropped down from the horse, and skipping up to the porter, plucked him by the tail of the bear-skin, so as to induce him to decline his huge head, and whispered something in his

ear. Not at the command of the lord of some eastern talisman did ever Afrite change his horrid frown into a look of smooth submission, more suddenly than the gigantic porter of Kenilworth relaxed the terrors of his look, at the instant Flibbertigibbet's whisper reached his ears. He flung his club upon the ground, and caught up Dickie Sludge, raising him to such a distance from the earth, as might have proved perilous had he chanced to let him slip.

"It is even so," he said, with a thundering sound of exultation — "it is even so, my little dandieprat — But who the devil could teach it thee?"

"Do not thou care about that," said Flibbertigibbet; "but" — he looked at Wayland and the lady, and then sunk what he had to say in a whisper, which needed not be a loud one, as the giant held him for his convenience close to his ear. The porter then gave Dickie a warm caress, and set him on the ground with the same care which a careful housewife uses in replacing a cracked china cup upon her mantle-piece, calling out at the same time to Wayland and the lady, "In with you — in with you — and take heed how you come too late another day when I chance to be porter."

“Ay, ay, in with you,” added Flibbertigibbet; “I must stay a short space with mine honest Philistine, my Goliath of Gath here; but I will be with you anon, and at the bottom of all your secrets, were they as deep and dark as the Castle dungeon.”

“I do believe thou would’st,” said Wayland; “but I trust the secret will be soon out of my keeping, and then I shall care the less whether thou or any one knows it.”

They now crossed the entrance tower, which obtained the name of the Gallery-tower, from the following circumstance:—The whole bridge, extending from the entrance to another tower on the opposite side of the lake, called Mortimer’s Tower, was so disposed as to make a spacious tilt-yard, about one hundred and thirty yards in length, and then in breadth, strewn with the finest sand, and defended on either side by strong and high palisades. The broad and fair gallery, destined for the ladies who were to witness the feats of chivalry presented on this area, was erected on the northern side of the outer tower, to which it gave name. Our travellers passed slowly along the bridge or tilt-yard, and arrived at Mortimer’s Tower, at its farthest extremity, through which the approach

led into the outer, or base court of the Castle. Mortimer's Tower bore on its front the scutcheon of the Earl of March, whose daring ambition overthrew the throne of Edward II. and aspired to share his power with the "She-wolf of France," to whom the unhappy monarch was wedded. The gate, which opened under this ominous memorial, was guarded by many warders in rich liveries; but they offered no opposition to the entrance of the Countess and her guide, who, having passed by license of the principal porter at the Gallery-tower, were not, it may be supposed, liable to interruption from his deputies. They entered accordingly, in silence, the great outward court of the Castle, having then full before them that vast and lordly pile, with all its stately towers, each gate open, as if in sign of unlimited hospitality, and the apartments filled with noble guests of every degree, besides dependants, retainers, domestics of every description, and all the appendages and promoters of mirth and revelry.

Amid this stately and busy scene, Wayland halted his horse, and looked upon the lady, as if waiting her commands what was next to be done, since they had safely reached the place of destination. As she remained silent, Wayland, after waiting a minute or two, ventured to ask

her in direct terms, what were her next commands. She raised her hand to her forehead, as if in the act of collecting her thoughts and resolution, while she answered him in low and suppressed voice, like the murmurs of one who speaks in a dream — “Commands? I may indeed claim right to command, but who is there will obey me.”

Then suddenly raising her head like one who has formed a decisive resolution, she addressed a gaily dressed domestic, who was crossing the court with importance and bustle in his countenance. — “Stop, sir,” she said. “I desire to speak with the Earl of Leicester.”

“With whom, an it please you?” said, the man, surprised at the demand; and then looking upon the mean equipage of her, who used towards him such a tone of authority, he added with insolence, “Why, what Bess of Bedlam is this, would ask to see my lord on such a day as the present?”

“Friend,” said the Countess, “be not insolent — my business with the Earl is most urgent.”

“You must get some one else to do it, were it thrice as urgent, said the fellow. — “I should

summon my lord from the Queen's royal presence to do *your* business, should I? — I were like to be thanked with a horse-whip. I marvel our old porter took not measure of such ware with his club, instead of giving them passage; but his brain is addled with getting his speech by heart."

Two or three persons stopped, attracted by the fleering way in which the serving-man expressed himself; and Wayland, alarmed both for himself and the lady, hastily addressed himself to one who appeared the most civil, and thrusting a piece of money into his hand, held a moment's counsel with him, on the subject of finding a place of temporary retreat for the lady. The person to whom he spoke, being one in some authority, rebuked the others for their incivility, and commanding one fellow to take care of the strangers' horses, he desired them to follow him. The Countess retained presence of mind sufficient to see that it was absolutely necessary she should comply with his request; and, leaving the rude lacqueys and grooms to crack their brutal jests about light heads, light heels, and so forth, Wayland and she followed in silence the deputy usher, who undertook to be their conductor.

They entered the inner court of the Castle by the great gateway, which extended betwixt the principal Keep or Donjon, called Caesar's Tower, and a stately building which passed by the name of King Henry's Lodging, and were thus placed in the centre of the noble pile, which presented on its different fronts magnificent specimens of every species of castellated architecture, from the Conquest to the reign of Elizabeth, with the appropriate style and ornaments of each.

Across this inner court also they were conducted by their guide to a small but strong tower, occupying the north-east angle of the building, adjacent to the great hall, and filling up a space betwixt the immense range of kitchens and the end of the great hall itself. The lower part of this tower was occupied by some of the household officers of Leicester, owing to its convenient vicinity to the places where their duty lay; but in the upper storey, which was reached by a narrow winding stair, was a small chamber, which, in the great demand for lodgings, had been on the present occasion fitted up for the reception of guests, though generally said to have been used as a place of confinement for some unhappy person who had been there murdered. Tradition called this prisoner Mervyn, and transferred his name to the tower. That it

had been used as a prison was not improbable; for the floor of each storey was arched, the walls of tremendous thickness, while the space of the chamber did not exceed fifteen feet square. The window, however, was pleasant, though narrow, and commanded a delightful view of what was called the *Pleasance*; a space of ground enclosed and decorated with arches, trophies, statues, fountains, and other architectural monuments, which formed one access from the castle itself to the garden. There was a bed in the apartment, and other preparations for the reception of a guest, to which the Countess paid but slight attention, her notice being instantly arrested by the sight of writing materials placed on the table, (not very commonly to be found in the bed-rooms of those days) which instantly suggested the idea of writing to Leicester, and remaining private until she had received his answer.

The deputy-us her having introduced them into this commodious apartment, courteously asked Wayland, whose generosity he had experienced, whether he could do any thing farther for his service. Upon receiving a gentle hint, that some refreshment would not be unacceptable, he presently conveyed the smith to the buttery-hatch, where dressed provisions of all sorts were dis-

tributed, with hospitable profusion, to all who asked for them. Wayland was readily supplied with some light provisions, such as he thought would best suit the faded appetite of the lady, and did not omit the opportunity of himself making a hasty but hearty meal on more substantial fare. He then returned to the apartment in the turret, where he found the Countess, who had finished her letter to Leicester; and, in lieu of a seal and silken thread, had secured it with a braid of her own beautiful tresses, secured by what is called a true-love knot.

“Good friend,” said she to Wayland, “whom God hath sent to aid me at my utmost need, I do beseech thee, as the last trouble you shall take for an unfortunate lady, to deliver this letter to the noble Earl of Leicester. Be it received as it may,” she said, with features agitated betwixt hope and fear, “thou, good fellow, shalt have no more cumber with me. But I hope the best; and if ever lady made a poor man rich, thou hast surely deserved it at my hand, should my happy days ever come round again. Give it, I pray you, into Lord Leicester’s own hand, and mark how he looks on receiving it.”

Wayland, on his part, readily undertook the commission, but anxiously prayed the lady, in

his turn, to partake of some refreshment; in which he at length prevailed, more through importunity, and her desire to see him begone on his errand, than from any inclination the Countess felt to comply with his request. He then left her, advising her to lock her door on the inside, and not to stir from her little apartment — and went to seek an opportunity of discharging her errand, as well as of carrying into effect a purpose of his own, which circumstances had induced him to form.

In fact, from the conduct of the lady during the journey — her long fits of profound silence — the irresolution and uncertainty which seemed to pervade all her movements, and the obvious incapacity of thinking and acting for herself, under which she seemed to labour, Wayland had formed the not improbable opinion, that the difficulties of her situation had in some degree affected her understanding.

When she had escaped from the seclusion of Cumnor Place, and the dangers to which she was there exposed, it would have seemed her most rational course to retire to her father's, or elsewhere, at a distance from the power of those by whom these dangers had been created. When, instead of doing so, she demanded to be con-

veyed to Kenilworth, Wayland had been only able to account for her conduct, by supposing that she meant to put herself under the tutelage of Tressilian, and to appeal to the protection of the Queen. But now, instead of following this natural course, she entrusted him with a letter to Leicester, the patron of Varney, and within whose jurisdiction at least, if not under his express authority, all the evils she had already suffered were inflicted upon her. This seemed an unsafe, and even a desperate measure, and Wayland felt anxiety for his own safety, as well as that of the lady, should he execute her commission, before he had secured the advice and countenance of a protector. He therefore resolved, before delivering the letter to Leicester, that he would seek out Tressilian, and communicate to him the arrival of the lady at Kenilworth, and thus at once rid himself of all further responsibility, and devolve the task of guiding and protecting this unfortunate lady upon the patron who had at first employed him in her service.

“He will be a better judge than I am,” said Wayland, “whether she is to be gratified in this humour of appeal to my Lord of Leicester, which seems like an act of insanity; and, therefore, I will turn the matter over on his hands,

deliver him the letter, receive what they list to give me by way of guerdon, and then shew the Castle of Kenilworth a pair of light heels; for, after the work I have been engaged in, it will be, I fear, neither a safe nor wholesome place of residence; and I would rather shoe colts on the coldest common in England than share in their gayest revels."


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## CHAPTER XXVII.

*In my time I have seen a boy do wonders.  
Robin, the red tinker, had a boy  
Would ha' run through a cat-hole.*

### *The Coxcomb.*

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AMID the universal bustle which filled the Castle and its environs, it was no easy matter to find out any individuel, and Wayland was still less likely to light upon Tressilian, whom he sought so anxiously, because, sensible of the danger of attracting attention, in the circumstances in which he was placed, he dared not make general inquiries among the retainers or domestics of Leicester. He learned, however, by indirect questions, that, in all probability, Tressilian must have been one of a large party of gentlemen in attendance on the Earl of Sussex, who



had accompanied their patron that morning to Kenilworth, when Leicester had received them with marks of the most formal respect and distinction. He farther learned, that both Earls, with their followers, and many other nobles, knights, and gentlemen, had taken horse, and gone towards Warwick several hours since, for the purpose of escorting the Queen to Kenilworth.

Her Majesty's arrival, like other great events, was delayed from hour to hour; and it was now announced by a breathless post, that her Majesty being detained by her gracious desire, to receive the homage of her lieges who had thronged to wait upon her at Warwick, it would be the hour of twilight ere she entered the Castle. The intelligence released for a time those who were upon duty, in the immediate expectation of the Queen's appearance, and ready to play their part in the solemnities with which it was to be accompanied; and Wayland, seeing several horsemen enter the Castle, was not without hopes that Tressilian might be of the number. That he might not lose an opportunity of meeting his patron in case this should be the case, Wayland placed himself in the base-court of the Castle, near Mortimer's Tower, and watched every one who went or came by the bridge,



the extremity of which was protected by that building. Thus stationed, nobody could enter or leave the Castle without his observation, and most anxiously did he study the garb and countenance of every horseman, as, passing from under the opposite Gallery-tower, they paced slowly, or curvetted, along the tilt-yard, and approached the entrance of the base-court.

But while Wayland gazed thus eagerly to discover him whom he saw not, he was pulled by the sleeve by one by whom he himself would not willingly have been seen.

This was Dickie Sludge, or Flibbertigibbet, who, like the imp whose name he bore, and whom he had been accoutred in order to resemble, seemed to be ever at the ear of those who thought least of him. Whatever were Wayland's internal feelings, he judged it necessary to express pleasure at their unexpected meeting.

“Ha! is it thou, my minikin — my millar's thumb — my prince of caco-dæmons — my little mouse?”

“Ay,” said Dickie, “the mouse which gnawed asunder the toils, just when the lion who was caught in them began to look wonderfully like an ass.”



“Why, thou little hop-the-gutter, thou art as sharp as vinegar this afternoon. But tell me, how did'st thou come off with yonder jolter-headed giant, whom I left thee with? — I was afraid he would have stripped thy clothes, and so swallowed thee as men peel and eat a roasted chesnut.”

“Had he done so,” replied the boy, he would have had more brains in his guts than ever he had in his noddle. But the giant is a courteous monster, and more grateful than many other folks whom I have helped at a pinch, Master Wayland Smith.”

“Beshrew me, Flibbertigibbet,” replied Wayland, “but thou art sharper than a Sheffield whittle! I would I knew by what charm you muzzled yonder old bear?”

“Ay, that is in your own manner,” answered Dickie; “you think fine speeches will pass muster instead of good will. However, as to this honest porter, you must know, that when we presented ourselves at the gate yonder, his brain was overburthened with a speech that had been penned for him, and which proved rather an overmatch for his gigantic faculties. Now this same pithy oration had been indited, like sundry others, by my learned magister, Erasmus Holi-



day, so I had heard it often enough to remember every line. As soon as I heard him blundering, and floundering like a fish upon dry land, through the first verse, and perceived him at a stand, I knew where the shoe pinched, and helped him to the next word, when he caught me up in an ecstasy, even as you saw but now. I promised, as the price of your admission, to hide me under his bearish gaberdine, and prompt him in the hour of need. I have just now been getting some food in the Castle, and am about to return to him."

"That's right — that's right, my dear Dickie," replied Wayland; "haste thee, for Heaven's sake! else the poor giant will be utterly disconsolate for want of his dwarfish auxiliary — Away with thee, Dickie."

"Ay, ay!" answered the boy — "Away with Dickie, when we have got what good of him we can. — You will not let me know the story of this lady, then, who is as much sister of thine as I am?"

"Why, what good would it do thee, thou silly elf?" said Wayland.

"O, stand ye on these terms?" said the boy; "well, I care not greatly about the matter, — only, I never smell out a secret, but I try to



be either at the right or the wrong end of it, and so good evening to ye."

"Nay, but Dickie," said Wayland, who knew the boy's restless and intriguing disposition too well not to fear his enmity — "stay, my dear Dickie — part not with old friends so shortly! — Thou shalt know all I know of the lady one day."

"Ay!" said Dickie; "and that day may prove a nigh one. — Fare thee well, Wayland — I will to my large-limbed friend, who, if he have not so sharp a wit as some folks, is at least more grateful for the service which other folks render him. And so again, good evening to ye."

So saying, he cast a somerset through the gateway, and, lighting on the bridge, ran with the extraordinary agility, which was one of his distinguished attributes, towards the Gallery-tower, and was out of sight in an instant.

"I would to God I were safe out of this Castle again!" prayed Wayland, internally; "for now that this mischievous imp has put his finger in the pye, it cannot but prove a mess fit for the devil's eating. I would to Heaven Master Tressilian would appear!"

Tressilian, whom he was thus anxiously expecting in one direction, had returned to Kenil-



worth by another access. It was indeed true, as Wayland had conjectured, that, in the earlier part of the day, he had accompanied the Earls on their cavalcade towards Warwick, not without hope that he might in that town hear some tidings of his emissary. Being disappointed in this expectation, and observing Varney amongst Leicester's attendants, seeming as if he had some purpose of advancing to and addressing him, he conceived, in the present circumstances, it was wisest to avoid the interview. He, therefore, left the presence-chamber when the High-Sheriff of the county was in the very midst of his dutiful address to her Majesty; and, mounting his horse, rode back to Kenilworth by a remote and circuitous road, and entered the Castle by a small sally-port in the western wall, at which he was readily admitted as one of the followers of the Earl of Sussex, towards whom Leicester had commanded the utmost courtesy to be exercised. It was thus that he met not Wayland, who was impatiently watching his arrival, and whom he himself would have been, at least, equally desirous to have seen.

Having delivered his horse to the charge of his attendant, he walked for a space in the Pleasance and in the garden, rather to indulge in comparative solitude his own reflections, than



to admire those singular beauties of nature and art which the magnificence of Leicester had there assembled. The greater part of the persons of condition had left the Castle for the present, to form part of the Earl's cavalcade; others, who remained behind, were on the battlements, outer walls, and towers, eager to view the splendid spectacle of the royal entry. The garden, therefore, while every other part of the Castle resounded with the human voice, was silent, but for the whispering of the leaves, the emulous warbling of the tenants of a large aviary, with their happier companions who remained denizens of the free air, and the plashing of the fountains, which, forced into the air from sculptures of fantastic and grotesque forms, fell down with ceaseless sound into the great basins of Italian marble.

The melancholy thoughts of Tressilian cast a gloomy shade on all the objects with which he was surrounded. He compared the magnificent scenes which he here traversed, with the deep woodland and wild moorland which surrounded Lidcote-Hall, and the image of Amy Robsart glided like a phantom through every landscape which his imagination summoned up. Nothing is perhaps more dangerous to the future happiness of men of deep thought and retired habits,



than the entertaining an early, long, and unfortunate attachment. It frequently sinks so deep into the mind, that it becomes their dream by night and their vision by day — mixes itself with every source of interest and enjoyment; and when blighted and withered by final disappointment, it seems as if the springs of the heart were dried up along with it. This aching of the heart, this languishing after a shadow which has lost all the gaiety of its colouring, this dwelling on the remembrance of a dream from which we have been long roughly awakened, is the weakness of a gentle and generous heart, and it was that of Tressilian.

He himself at length became sensible of the necessity of forcing other objects upon his mind; and for this purpose he left the Pleasance, in order to mingle with the noisy crowd upon the walls, and view the preparation for the pageants. But as he left the garden, and heard the busy hum mixed with music and laughter, which floated around him, he felt an uncontrollable reluctance to mix with society, whose feelings were in a tone so different from his own, and resolved, instead of doing so, to retire to the chamber assigned him, and employ himself in study until the tolling of the great castle-bell should announce the arrival of Elizabeth.



Tressilian crossed accordingly by the passage betwixt the immense range of kitchens and the great hall, and ascended to the third storey of Mervyn's Tower, and applying himself to the door of the small apartment which had been allotted to him, was surprised to find it was locked. He then recollected that the deputy-chamberlain had given him a master-key, advising him, in the present confused state of the Castle, to keep his door as much shut as possible. He applied this key to the lock, the bolt revolved, he entered, and in the same instant saw a female form seated in the apartment, and recognized that form to be Amy Robsart. His first idea was, that a heated imagination had raised the image on which it doated into visible existence; his second, that he beheld an apparition — the third and abiding conviction, that it was Amy herself, paler, indeed, and thinner than in the days of heedless happiness, when she possessed the form and hue of a wood-nymph, with the beauty of a sylph; but still Amy, unequalled in loveliness by aught which had ever visited his eyes.

The astonishment of the Countess was scarce less than that of Tressilian, although it was of shorter duration, because she had heard from Wayland that he was in the Castle. She had



started up at his first entrance, and now stood facing him, the paleness of her cheeks having given way to a deep blush.

“Tressilian,” she said, at length, “why come you here?”

“Nay, why come *you* here, Amy,” returned Tressilian, “unless it be at length to claim that aid, which, as far as one man’s heart and arm can extend, shall instantly be rendered to you?”

She was silent a moment, and then answered in a sorrowful, rather than an angry tone, — “I require no aid, Tressilian, and would rather be injured than benefited by any which your kindness can offer me. Believe me, I am near one whom law and love oblige to protect me.”

“The villain then hath done you the poor justice which remained in his power,” said Tressilian; “and I behold before me the wife of Varney!”

“The wife of Varney!” she replied, with all the emphasis of scorn; “With what base name, sir, does your boldness stigmatize the — the — the” — She hesitated, dropped her tone of scorn, looked down, and was confused and silent, for she recollected what fatal consequences might attend her completing the sentence with “the



Countess of Leicester," which were the words that had naturally suggested themselves. It would have been a betrayal of the secret, on which her husband had assured her that his fortunes depended, to Tressilian, to Sussex, to the Queen, and to the whole assembled court. "Never," she thought, "will I break my promised silence. I will submit to every suspicion rather than that."

The tears rose to her eyes, as she stood silent before Tressilian; while, looking on her with mingled grief and pity, he said, "Alas! Amy, your eyes contradict your tongue. That speaks of a protector, willing and able to watch over you; but these tell me you are ruined and deserted by the wretch to whom you have attached yourself."

She looked on him, with eyes in which anger sparkled through her tears, but only repeated the word "wretch!" with a scornful emphasis.

"Yes, *wretch!*" said Tressilian; "for were he aught better, why are you here, and alone in my apartment? why was not fitting provision made for your honourable reception?"

"In your apartment?" repeated Amy; "in *your* apartment? It shall instantly be relieved of my presence." She hastened towards the door;



but the sad recollection of her deserted state at once pressed on her mind, and, pausing on the threshold, she added, in a tone unutterably pathetic, "Alas! I had forgot — I know not where to go" —

"I see — I see it all," said Tressilian, springing to her side, and leading her back to the seat, on which she sunk down — "You *do* need aid — you *do* need protection, though you will not own it; and you shall not need it in vain. Leaning on my arm, as the representative of your excellent and broken-hearted father, on the very threshold of the Castle-gate, you shall meet Elizabeth; and the first deed she shall do in the halls of Kenilworth, shall be an act of justice to her sex and her subjects. Strong in my good cause, and in the Queen's justice, the power of her minion shall not shake my resolution. I will instantly seek Sussex."

"Not for all that is under heaven!" said the Countess, much alarmed, and feeling the absolute necessity of obtaining time, at least, for consideration. "Tressilian, you were wont to be generous — Grant me one request, and believe, if it be your wish to save me from misery, and from madness, you will do more by making me the promise I ask of you, than Elizabeth can do for me with all her power."



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“Ask me any thing for which you can allege reason,” said Tressilian; “but demand not of me” —

“O, limit not your boon, dear Edmund!” exclaimed the Countess — “you once loved that I should call you so — Limit not your boon to reason! for my case is all madness, and phrenzy must guide the counsels which alone can aid me.”

“If you speak thus wildly,” said Tressilian, astonishment again overpowering both his grief and his resolution, “I must believe you indeed incapable of thinking or acting for yourself.”

“Oh no!” she exclaimed, sinking on one knee before him, “I am not mad — I am but a creature unutterably miserable, and, from circumstances the most singular, dragged on to a precipice by the arm of him who thinks he is keeping me from it — even by yours, Tressilian — by yours, whom I have honoured, respected — all but loved — and yet loved too — loved too, Tressilian — though not as you wished me.”

There was an energy — a self-possession — an abandonment in her voice and manner — a total resignation of herself to his generosity, which, together with the kindness of her expressions to himself, moved him deeply. He raised



her, and, in broken accents, entreated her to be comforted.

“I cannot,” she said, “I will not be comforted, till you grant me my request! I will speak as plainly as I dare — I am now awaiting the commands of one who has a right to issue them — The interference of a third person — of you in especial, Tressilian, will be ruin — utter ruin to me. Wait but four-and-twenty hours, and it may be that the poor Amy may have the means to shew that she values, and can reward, your disinterested friendship — that she is happy herself, and has the means to make you so — It is surely worth your patience, for so short a space.”

Tressilian paused, and weighing in his mind the various probabilities which might render a violent interference on his part more prejudicial than advantageous, both to the happiness and reputation of Amy; considering also that she was within the walls of Kenilworth, and could suffer no injury in a castle honoured with the Queen’s residence, and filled with her guards and attendants, — he conceived, upon the whole, that he might render her more evil than good service, by intruding upon her his appeal to Elizabeth in her behalf. He expressed his resolution cautiously however, doubting naturally whether



Amy's hopes of extricating herself from her difficulties rested on any thing stronger than a blinded attachment to Varney, whom he supposed to be her seducer.

"Amy," he said, while he fixed his sad and expressive eyes on her's, which, in her ecstasy of doubt, terror, and perplexity, she cast up towards him, "I have ever remarked, that when others called thee girlish and wilful, there lay under that external semblance of youthful and selfwilled folly, deep feeling and strong sense. In this I will confide, trusting your own fate in your own hands for the space of twenty-four hours, without my interference by word or act."

"Do you promise me this, Tressilian?" said the Countess. "Is it possible you can yet repose so much confidence in me? Do you promise, as you are a gentleman and man of honour, to intrude in my matters, neither by speech nor action, whatever you may see or hear that seems to you to demand your interference? — Will you so far trust me?"

"I will, upon my honour," said Tressilian; "but when that space is expired" —

"When that space is expired," she said, interrupting him, "you are free to act as your judgment shall determine."



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“Nothing,” said she, “save to leave me — that is, if — I blush to acknowledge my helplessness by asking it — if you can spare me the use of this apartment for the next twenty-four hours.”

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“Argue not, but leave me,” she said; and added, as he slowly and unwillingly retired, “Generous Edmund! the time may come, when Amy may shew she deserved thy noble attachment.”

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 CHAPTER XXVIII.

*What, man, ne'er lack a draught, when the  
full can*

*Stands at thine elbow, and craves emptying! —*

*Nay, fear not me, for I have no delight*

*To watch men's vices, since I have myself*

*Of virtue nought to boast of. — I'm a striker,*

*Would have the world strike with me, pelt-  
mell, all.*

*Pandaemonium.*

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TRESSILIAN, in strange agitation of mind, had hardly stepped down the first two or three steps of the winding stair-case, when, greatly to his surprise and displeasure, he met Michael Lambourne, wearing an impudent familiarity of visage, for which Tressilian felt much disposed to throw him down stairs; until he remembered the prejudice which Amy, the only object of his solicitude, was likely to receive from his en-



gaging in any act of violence at that time, and in that place.

He therefore contented himself with looking sternly upon Lambourne, as upon one whom he deemed unworthy of notice, and attempted to pass him in his way down stairs, without any symptom of recognition. But Lambourne, who, amidst the profusion of that day's hospitality, had not failed to take a deep, though not an overpowering cup of sack, was not in the humour of humbling himself before any man's looks. He stopped Tressilian upon the stair-case without the least bashfulness or embarrassment, and addressed him as if he had been on kind and intimate terms: — "What, no grudge between us I hope upon old scores, Master Tressilian? — nay, I am one who remember former kindness rather than later feud — I'll convince you that I meant honestly and kindly, ay, and comfortably by you."

"I desire none of your intimacy," said Tressilian — "keep company with your mates."

"Now see how hasty he is!" said Lambourne; "and how these gentles, that are made questionless out of the porcelain clay of the earth, look down upon poor Michael Lambourne! You would



take Master Tressilian now for the most maid-like, modest, simpering squire of dames, that ever made love when candles were long i' the stuff — snuff — call you it? — Why you would play the saint on us, Master Tressilian, and forget that even now thou hast a commodity in thy very bed-chamber, to the shame of my lord's Castle, ha! ha! ha! Have I touched you, Master Tressilian?"

"I know not what you mean," said Tressilian, inferring, however, too surely, that this licentious ruffian must have been sensible of Amy's presence in his apartment; "but if," he continued, "thou art varlet of the chambers, and lackest a fee, there is one to leave mine unmolested."

Lambourne looked at the piece of gold, and put it in his pocket, saying — "Now, I know not but you might have done more with me by a kind word, than by this chiming rogue. But after all he pays well that pays with gold — and Mike Lambourne was never a make-bate, or a spoil-sport, or the like. E'en live and let others live, that is my motto — only, I would not let some folks cock their beaver at me neither as if they were made of silver ore, and I of Dutch pewter. So if I keep your secret,



Master Tressilian, you may look sweet on me at least; and were I to want a little backing or countenance, being caught, as you see the best of us may be, in a sort of peccadillo — why, you owe it me — and so e'en make your chamber serve you and that same bird in bower beside — it's all one to Mike Lambourne."

"Make way, sir," said Tressilian, unable to bridle his indignation, "you have had your fee."

"Um!" said Lambourne, giving place, however, while he sulkily muttered between his teeth, repeating Tressilian's words — "Make way — and you have had your fee — but it matters not, I will spoil no sport, as I said before; I am no dog in the manger — mind that."

He spoke louder and louder, as Tressilian, by whom he felt himself overawed, got farther and farther out of hearing.

"I am no dog in the manger — but I will not carry coals neither — mind that, my Master Tressilian; and I will have a peep at this wench, whom you have quartered so commodiously in your old haunted room — afraid of ghosts belike, and not too willing to sleep alone. If I had done this now in a strange lord's castle, the word had been, — The porter's lodge for the



knave! and, — Have him flogged — trundle him down stairs like a turnip! — Ay but your virtuous gentlemen take strange privileges over us, who are downright servants of our senses. Well — I have my Master Tressilian's head under my belt by this lucky discovery, that is one thing certain; and I will try to get a sight of this Lindabrides of his, that is another."



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## CHAPTER XXIX.

*Now fare thee well, my master — if true  
service*

*Be guerdon'd with hard e'e, uncut the tow-  
line,*

*And let our barks across the pathless flood  
Hold several courses —*

*Shipwreck.*

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TRESSILIAN walked into the outer yard of the Castle, scarce knowing what to think of his late strange and most unexpected interview with Amy Robsart, and dubious if he had done well, being intrusted with the delegated authority of her father, to pass his word so solemnly to leave her to her own guidance for so many hours. Yet how could he have denied her request, — dependant as she had too probably rendered herself upon Varney? Such was his natural reasoning. The happiness of her future life might



depend upon his not driving her to extremities, and since no power of Tressilian's could extricate her from the power of Varney, supposing he was to acknowledge Amy to be his wife, what title had he to destroy the hope of domestic peace, which might yet remain to her, by setting enmity betwixt them? Tressilian resolved, therefore, scrupulously to observe his word pledged to Amy, both because it had been given, and because, as he still thought, while he considered and reconsidered that extraordinary interview, it could not with justice or propriety have been refused.

In one respect, he had gained much towards securing effectual protection for this unhappy and still beloved object of his early affection. Amy was no longer mewed up in a distant and solitary retreat, under the charge of persons of doubtful reputation. She was in the Castle of Kenilworth, within the verge of the Royal Court for the time, free from all risk of violence, and liable to be produced before Elizabeth on first summons. These were circumstances which could not but assist greatly the efforts which she might have occasion to use in

While he was thus  
and perils which



sence in Kenilworth, Tressilian was hastily and anxiously accosted by Wayland, who, after hastily ejaculating, "Thank God, your worship is found at last!" proceeded with breathless caution to pour into his ear the intelligence, that the lady had escaped from Cumnor Place.

"And is at present in this Castle," said Tressilian; "I know it, and I have seen her — Was it by her own choice she found refuge in my apartment?"

"No," answered Wayland; "but I could think of no other way of safely bestowing her, and was but too happy to find a deputy-usher who knew where you were quartered; — in jolly society truly, the hall on the one hand, and the kitchen on the other!"

"Peace, no time for jesting," answered Tressilian.

"I v... well," said the artist, "three days... and an... This... not... e will... our... u not... her... put h... ands... I... safe... , h... owner



“Is it possible?” said Tressilian. “But she may have hopes the Earl will exert his influence in her favour over his villainous dependant.”

“I know nothing of that,” said Wayland — “but I believe, if she is to reconcile herself with either Leicester or Varney, the side of the Castle of Kenilworth, which will be safest for us, will be the outside from which we can fastest fly away. It is not my purpose to abide an instant after delivery of the letter to Leicester, which waits but your commands to find its way to him. See, here it is — but no — a plague on it — I must have left it in my dog-hole, in the hay-loft yonder, where I am to sleep.”

“Death and fury!” said Tressilian, transported beyond his usual patience; “thou hast not lost that on which may depend a stake more important than a thousand such lives as thine?”

“Lost it!” answered Wayland, readily; “that were a jest indeed! No, sir, I have it carefully put up with my night-sack, and some matters I have occasion to use — I will fetch it in an instant.”

“Do so,” said Tressilian; “be faithful, and thou shalt be well rewarded. But if I have reason to suspect thee, a dead dog were in better case than thou.”



Wayland bowed, and took his leave with seeming confidence and alacrity; but, in fact, filled with the utmost dread and confusion. The letter was lost, that was certain, notwithstanding the apology which he had made to appease the impatient displeasure of Tressilian. It was lost — it might fall into wrong hands — it would then, certainly, occasion a discovery of the whole intrigue in which he had been engaged; nor, indeed, did Wayland see much prospect of its remaining concealed, in any event. He felt much hurt, besides, at Tressilian's burst of impatience.

“Nay, if I am to be paid in this coin, for services where my neck is concerned, it is time I should look to myself. Here have I offended, for aught I know, to the death, the lord of this stately Castle, whose word were as powerful to take away my life, as the breath which speaks it to blow out a farthing candle. And all this for a mad lady, and a melancholy gallant; who, on the loss of a four-nooked bit of paper, has his hand on his poignado, and swears death and fury! — Then there is the Doctor and Varney — I will save myself from the whole mess of them — Life is dearer than gold — I will fly this instant, though I leave my reward behind me.”



These reflections naturally enough occurred to a mind like Wayland's, who found himself engaged far deeper than he had expected in a train of mysterious and unintelligible intrigues, in which the actors seemed hardly to know their own course. And yet, to do him justice, his personal fears were, in some degree, counterbalanced by his compassion for the deserted state of the lady.

“I care not a groat for Master Tressilian,” he said; “I have done more than bargain by him, and I have brought his errant-damozel within his reach, so that he may look after her himself; but I fear the poor thing is in much danger amongst these stormy spirits. I will to her chamber, and tell her the fate which has befallen her letter, that she may write another if she list. She cannot lack a messenger, I trow, where there are so many lacqueys that can carry a letter to their lord. And I will tell her also that I leave the Castle, trusting her to God, her own guidance, and Master Tressilian's care and looking after. — Perhaps she may remember the ring she offered me — it was well earned, I trow; but she is a lovely creature, and — marry hang the ring! I will not bear a base mind for the matter. If I fare ill in this world for my good nature, I will have better chance in the



next. — So now for the lady, and then for the road.”

With the stealthy step and jealous eye of the cat that steals on her prey, Wayland resumed the way to the Countess's chamber, sliding along by the side of the courts and passages, alike observant of all around him, and studious himself to escape observation. In this manner he crossed the outward and inward castle-yard, and the great arched passage, which, running betwixt the range of kitchen offices and the hall, led to the bottom of the little winding-stair that gave access to the chambers of Mervyn's Tower.

The artist congratulated himself on having escaped the various perils of his journey, and was in the act of ascending by two steps at once, when he observed that the shadow of a man, thrown from a door which stood a-jar, darkened the opposite wall of the stair-case. Wayland drew back cautiously, went down to the inner court-yard, spent about a quarter of an hour, which seemed at least quadruple its usual duration, in walking from place to place, and then returned to the tower, in hopes to find that the lurker had disappeared. He ascended as high as the suspicious spot — there was no shadow on the wall — he ascended a few yards farther — the door was still ajar, and he was doubtful



whether to advance or retreat, when it was suddenly thrown wide open, and Michael Lambourne bolted out upon the astonished Wayland. "Who the devil art thou? and what seek'st thou in this part of the Castle? March into that chamber, and be hanged to thee!"

"I am no dog, to go at every man's whistle," said the artist, affecting a confidence which was belied by a timid shake in his voice.

"Say'st thou me so? — Come hither, Lawrence Staples."

A huge ill-made and ill-looking fellow, upwards of six feet high, appeared at the door, and Lambourne proceeded: "If thou be'st so fond of this tower, my friend, thou shalt see its foundations, good twelve feet below the bed of the lake, and tenanted by certain jolly toads, snakes, and so forth, which thou wilt find mighty good company. Therefore, once more I ask you in fair play, who thou art, and what thou seek'st here?"

If the dungeon-grate once clashes behind me, thought Wayland, I am a gone man. — He therefore answered submissively, "He was the poor juggler whom his honour had met yesterday in Weatherly-bottom."



“And what juggling trick art thou playing in this tower? Thy gang,” said Lambourne, lie over against Clinton’s buildings.”

“I came here to see my sister,” said the juggler, “who is in Master Tressilian’s chamber, just above.”

“Aha!” said Lambourne, smiling, “here be truths — upon my honour, for a stranger, this same Master Tressilian makes himself at home among us, and furnishes out his cell handsomely, with all sort of commodities. — Hark thee, sirrah — This will be a precious tale of the sainted Master Tressilian, and will be welcome to some folks, as a purse of broad pieces to me — Hark ye, fellow,” he continued, addressing Wayland, “thou shalt not give Puss a hint to steal away — we must catch her in her form. So, back with that pitiful sheep-biting visage of thine, or I will fling thee from the window of the tower, and try if your juggling skill can save your bones.”

“Your worship will not be so hard-hearted, I trust,” said Wayland; “poor folks must live. I trust your honour will allow me to speak with my sister?”

“Sister on Adam’s side, I warrant,” said Lambourne; “or, if otherwise, the more knave thou.



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He therefore contented himself with looking sternly upon Lambourne, as upon one whom he deemed unworthy of notice, and attempted to pass him in his way down stairs, without any symptom of recognition. But Lambourne, who, amidst the profusion of that day's hospitality, had not failed to take a deep, though not an overpowering cup of sack, was not in the humour of humbling himself before any man's looks. He stopped Tressilian upon the stair-case without the least bashfulness or embarrassment, and addressed him as if he had been on kind and intimate terms: — "What, no grudge between us I hope upon old scores, Master Tressilian? — nay, I am one who remember former kindness rather than later feud — I'll convince you that I meant honestly and kindly, ay, and comfortably by you."

"I desire none of your intimacy," said Tressilian — "keep company with your mates."

"Now see how hasty he is!" said Lambourne; "and how these gentles, that are made questionless out of the porcelain clay of the earth, look down upon poor Michael Lambourne! You would



take Master Tressilian now for the most maid-like, modest, simpering squire of dames, that ever made love when candles were long i' the stuff — snuff — call you it? — Why you would play the saint on us, Master Tressilian, and forget that even now thou hast a commodity in thy very bed-chamber, to the shame of my lord's Castle, ha! ha! ha! Have I touched you, Master Tressilian?"

"I know not what you mean," said Tressilian, inferring, however, too surely, that this licentious ruffian must have been sensible of Amy's presence in his apartment; "but if," he continued, "thou art varlet of the chambers, and lackest a fee, there is one to leave mine unmolested."

Lambourne looked at the piece of gold, and put it in his pocket, saying — "Now, I know not but you might have done more with me by a kind word, than by this chiming rogue. But after all he pays well that pays with gold — and Mike Lambourne was never a make-bate, or a spoil-sport, or the like. E'en live and let others live, that is my motto — only, I would not let some folks cock their beaver at me neither as if they were made of silver ore, and I of Dutch pewter. So if I keep your secret,



Master Tressilian, you may look sweet on me at least; and were I to want a little backing or countenance, being caught, as you see the best of us may be, in a sort of peccadillo — why, you owe it me — and so e'en make your chamber serve you and that same bird in bower beside — it's all one to Mike Lambourne."

"Make way, sir," said Tressilian, unable to bridle his indignation, "you have had your fee."

"Um!" said Lambourne, giving place, however, while he sulkily muttered between his teeth, repeating Tressilian's words — "Make way — and you have had your fee — but it matters not, I will spoil no sport, as I said before; I am no dog in the manger — mind that."

He spoke louder and louder, as Tressilian, by whom he felt himself overawed, got farther and farther out of hearing.

"I am no dog in the manger — but I will not carry coals neither — mind that, my Master Tressilian; and I will have a peep at this wench, whom you have quartered so commodiously in your old haunted room — afraid of ghosts belike, and not too willing to sleep alone. If I had done this now in a strange lord's castle, the word had been, — The porter's lodge for the



knave! and, — Have him flogged — trundle him down stairs like a turnip! — Ay but your virtuous gentlemen take strange privileges over us, who are downright servants of our senses. Well — I have my Master Tressilian's head under my belt by this lucky discovery, that is one thing certain; and I will try to get a sight of this Lindabrides of his, that is another."



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## CHAPTER XXIX.

*Now fare thee well, my master — if true  
service*

*Be guerdon'd with hard e'e, uncut the tow-  
line,*

*And let our barks across the pathless flood  
Hold several courses —*

*Shipwreck.*

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TRESSILIAN walked into the outer yard of the Castle, scarce knowing what to think of his late strange and most unexpected interview with Amy Robsart, and dubious if he had done well, being intrusted with the delegated authority of her father, to pass his word so solemnly to leave her to her own guidance for so many hours. Yet how could he have denied her request, — dependant as she had too probably rendered herself upon Varney? Such was his natural reasoning. The happiness of her future life might



depend upon his not driving her to extremities, and since no power of Tressilian's could extricate her from the power of Varney, supposing he was to acknowledge Amy to be his wife, what title had he to destroy the hope of domestic peace, which might yet remain to her, by setting enmity betwixt them? Tressilian resolved, therefore, scrupulously to observe his word pledged to Amy, both because it had been given, and because, as he still thought, while he considered and reconsidered that extraordinary interview, it could not with justice or propriety have been refused.

In one respect, he had gained much towards securing effectual protection for this unhappy and still beloved object of his early affection. Amy was no longer mewed up in a distant and solitary retreat, under the charge of persons of doubtful reputation. She was in the Castle of Kenilworth, within the verge of the Royal Court for the time, free from all risk of violence, and liable to be produced before Elizabeth on the first summons. These were circumstances which could not but assist greatly the efforts which he might have occasion to use in her behalf.

While he was thus balancing the advantages and perils which attended her unexpected pre-



sence in Kenilworth, Tressilian was hastily and anxiously accosted by Wayland, who, after hastily ejaculating, "Thank God, your worship is found at last!" proceeded with breathless caution to pour into his ear the intelligence, that the lady had escaped from Cumnor Place.

"And is at present in this Castle," said Tressilian; "I know it, and I have seen her — Was it by her own choice she found refuge in my apartment?"

"No," answered Wayland; "but I could think of no other way of safely bestowing her, and was but too happy to find a deputy-usher who knew where you were quartered; — in jolly society truly, the hall on the one hand, and the kitchen on the other!"

"Peace, this is no time for jesting," answered Tressilian, sternly.

"I wot that but too well," said the artist, "for I have felt these three days as if I had an halter round my neck. This lady knows not her own mind — she will have none of your aid — commands you not to be named to her — and is about to put herself into the hands of my Lord Leicester. I had never got her safe under your chamber, had she known the owner of it."



“Is it possible?” said Tressilian. “But she may have hopes the Earl will exert his influence in her favour over his villainous dependant.”

“I know nothing of that,” said Wayland — “but I believe, if she is to reconcile herself with either Leicester or Varney, the side of the Castle of Kenilworth, which will be safest for us, will be the outside from which we can fastest fly away. It is not my purpose to abide an instant after delivery of the letter to Leicester, which waits but your commands to find its way to him. See, here it is — but no — a plague on it — I must have left it in my dog-hole, in the hay-loft yonder, where I am to sleep.”

“Death and fury!” said Tressilian, transported beyond his usual patience; “thou hast not lost that on which may depend a stake more important than a thousand such lives as thine?”

“Lost it!” answered Wayland, readily; “that were a jest indeed! No, sir, I have it carefully put up with my night-sack, and some matters I have occasion to use — I will fetch it in an instant.”

“Do so,” said Tressilian; “be faithful, and thou shalt be well rewarded. But if I have reason to suspect thee, a dead dog were in better case than thou.”



Wayland bowed, and took his leave with seeming confidence and alacrity; but, in fact, filled with the utmost dread and confusion. The letter was lost, that was certain, notwithstanding the apology which he had made to appease the impatient displeasure of Tressilian. It was lost — it might fall into wrong hands — it would then, certainly, occasion a discovery of the whole intrigue in which he had been engaged; nor, indeed, did Wayland see much prospect of its remaining concealed, in any event. He felt much hurt, besides, at Tressilian's burst of impatience.

“Nay, if I am to be paid in this coin, for services where my neck is concerned, it is time I should look to myself. Here have I offended, for aught I know, to the death, the lord of this stately Castle, whose word were as powerful to take away my life, as the breath which speaks it to blow out a farthing candle. And all this for a mad lady, and a melancholy gallant; who, on the loss of a four-nooked bit of paper, has his hand on his poignado, and swears death and fury! — Then there is the Doctor and Varney — I will save myself from the whole mess of them — Life is dearer than gold — I will fly this instant, though I leave my reward behind me.”



These reflections naturally enough occurred to a mind like Wayland's, who found himself engaged far deeper than he had expected in a train of mysterious and unintelligible intrigues, in which the actors seemed hardly to know their own course. And yet, to do him justice, his personal fears were, in some degree, counterbalanced by his compassion for the deserted state of the lady.

“I care not a groat for Master Tressilian,” he said; “I have done more than bargain by him, and I have brought his errant-damozel within his reach, so that he may look after her himself; but I fear the poor thing is in much danger amongst these stormy spirits. I will to her chamber, and tell her the fate which has befallen her letter, that she may write another if she list. She cannot lack a messenger, I trow, where there are so many lacqueys that can carry a letter to their lord. And I will tell her also that I leave the Castle, trusting her to God, her own guidance, and Master Tressilian's care and looking after. — Perhaps she may remember the ring she offered me — it was well earned, I trow; but she is a lovely creature, and — marry hang the ring! I will not bear a base mind for the matter. If I fare ill in this world for my good nature, I will have better chance in the



next. — So now for the lady, and then for the road."

With the stealthy step and jealous eye of the cat that steals on her prey, Wayland resumed the way to the Countess's chamber, sliding along by the side of the courts and passages, alike observant of all around him, and studious himself to escape observation. In this manner he crossed the outward and inward castle-yard, and the great arched passage, which, running betwixt the range of kitchen offices and the hall, led to the bottom of the little winding-stair that gave access to the chambers of Mervyn's Tower.

The artist congratulated himself on having escaped the various perils of his journey, and was in the act of ascending by two steps at once, when he observed that the shadow of a man, thrown from a door which stood ajar, darkened the opposite wall of the stair-case. Wayland drew back cautiously, went down to the inner court-yard, spent about a quarter of an hour, which seemed at least quadruple its usual duration, in walking from place to place, and then returned to the tower, in hopes to find that the lurker had disappeared. He ascended as high as the suspicious spot — there was no shadow on the wall — he ascended a few yards farther — the door was still ajar, and he was doubtful



whether to advance or retreat, when it was suddenly thrown wide open, and Michael Lambourne bolted out upon the astonished Wayland. "Who the devil art thou? and what seek'st thou in this part of the Castle? March into that chamber, and be hanged to thee!"

"I am no dog, to go at every man's whistle," said the artist, affecting a confidence which was belied by a timid shake in his voice.

"Say'st thou me so? — Come hither, Lawrence Staples."

A huge ill-made and ill-looking fellow, upwards of six feet high, appeared at the door, and Lambourne proceeded: "If thou be'st so fond of this tower, my friend, thou shalt see its foundations, good twelve feet below the bed of the lake, and tenanted by certain jolly toads, snakes, and so forth, which thou wilt find mighty good company. Therefore, once more I ask you in fair play, who thou art, and what thou seek'st here?"

If the dungeon-grate once clashes behind me, thought Wayland, I am a gone man. — He therefore answered submissively, "He was the poor juggler whom his honour had met yesterday in Weatherly-bottom."



“And what juggling trick art thou playing in this tower? Thy gang,” said Lambourne, lie over against Clinton’s buildings.”

“I came here to see my sister,” said the juggler, “who is in Master Tressilian’s chamber, just above.”

“Aha!” said Lambourne, smiling, “here be truths — upon my honour, for a stranger, this same Master Tressilian makes himself at home among us, and furnishes out his cell handsomely, with all sort of commodities. — Hark thee, sirrah — This will be a precious tale of the sainted Master Tressilian, and will be welcome to some folks, as a purse of broad pieces to me — Hark ye, fellow,” he continued, addressing Wayland, “thou shalt not give Puss a hint to steal away — we must catch her in her form. So, back with that pitiful sheep-biting visage of thine, or I will fling thee from the window of the tower, and try if your juggling skill can save your bones.”

“Your worship will not be so hard-hearted, I trust,” said Wayland; “poor folks must live. I trust your honour will allow me to speak with my sister?”

“Sister on Adam’s side, I warrant,” said Lambourne; “or, if otherwise, the more knave thou.



But sister or no sister, thou diest on point of fox, if thou comest a prying to this tower once more. And now I think of it, uds daggers and death! I will see thee out of the Castle, for this is a more main concern than thy jugglery."

"But, please your worship," said Wayland, "I am to enact Arion in the pageant upon the lake this very evening."

"I will act it myself, by Saint Christopher," said Lambourne — "Orion, call'st thou him? — I will act Orion, his belt and his seven stars to boot. Come along, for a rascal knave as thou art — follow me! — Or stay — Lawrence, do thou bring him along."

Lawrence seized by the collar of the cloak the unresisting juggler, while Lambourne, with hasty steps, led the way to that same sally-port, or secret postern, by which Tressilian had returned to the Castle, and which opened in the western wall, at no great distance from Mervyn's Tower.

While traversing with a rapid foot the space betwixt the tower and the sally-port, Wayland in vain racked his brain for some device which might avail the poor lady, for whom, notwithstanding his own imminent danger, he felt deep interest. But when he was thrust out of the



Castle, and informed by Lambourne, with a tremendous oath, that instant death would be the consequence of his again approaching it, he cast up his hands and eyes to heaven, as if to call God to witness he had stood to the uttermost in defence of the oppressed; then turned his back on the proud towers of Kenilworth, and went his way to seek a humbler and safer place of refuge.

Lawrence and Lambourne gazed a little while after Wayland, and then turned to go back to their tower, when the former thus addressed his companion: "Never credit me, Master Lambourne, if I can guess why thou hast driven this poor caitiff from the Castle, just when he was to bear a part in the show that was beginning, and all this about a wench."

"Ah, Lawrence," replied Lambourne, "thou art thinking of Black Joan Jugges of Slingdon, and hast sympathy with human frailty. But couragio, most noble Duke of the Dungeon and Lord of Limbo, for thou art as dark in this matter as thine own dominions of Little-ease. My most reverend Seignor of the Low Countries of Kenilworth, know that our most notable master, Richard Varney, would give as much to have a hole in this same Tressilian's coat, as would make us some fifty midnight carousals,



with the full leave of bidding the steward go snick up, if he came to startle us too soon from our goblets."

"Nay, an that be the case, thou hast right," said Lawrence Staples, the upper-warder, or in common phrase, the first jailor of Kenilworth Castle, and of the Liberty and Honour belonging thereto; "but how will you manage when you are absent at the Queen's entrance, Master Lambourne; for methinks thou must attend thy master there?"

"Why thou, mine honest prince of prisons, must keep ward in my absence — Let Tressilian enter if he will, but see thou let no one come out. If the damsel herself would make a break, as 'tis not unlike she may, scare her back with rough words — she is but a paltry player's wench after all."

"Nay, for that matter," said Lawrence, "I might shut the iron wicket upon her, that stands without the double door, and so force per force she will be bound to her answer without more trouble."

"Then Tressilian will not get access to her," said Lambourne, reflecting a moment. "But 'tis no matter — she will be detected in his chamber, and that is all one. — But confess,



thou old bat's-eyed dungeon-keeper, that you fear to keep a wake by yourself in that Mervyn's Tower of thine?"

"Why, as to fear, Master Lambourne," said the fellow, "I mind it not the turning of a key; but strange things have been heard and seen in that tower. — You have heard, for as short time as you have been in Kenilworth, that it is haunted by the spirit of Arthur ap Mervyn, a wild chief taken by fierce Lord Mortimer, when he was one of the Lords Marchers of Wales, and murdered, as they say, in that same tower which bears his name?"

"O, I have heard the tale five hundred times," said Lambourne, "and how the ghost is always most vociferous when they boil leeks and stir-about, or fry toasted cheese in the culinary regions. Santo Diavolo, man, hold thy tongue, I know all about it."

"Ay, but thou dost not though," said the turnkey, "for as wise as thou wouldst make thyself. Ah, it is an awful thing to murder a prisoner in his ward! — You, that may have given a man a stab in a dark street, know nothing of it. To give a mutinous fellow a knock on the head with the keys, and bid him be quiet, that's what I call keeping order in the ward;



but to draw weapon and slay him, as was done to this Welsh lord, *that* raises you a ghost that will render your prison-house untenable by any decent captive for some hundred years. And I have that regard for my prisoners, poor things, that I have put good squires and men of worship, that have taken a ride on the highway, or slandered my Lord of Leicester, or the like, fifty feet under ground, rather than I would put them into that upper chamber yonder that they call Mervyn's Bower. Indeed, by good Saint Peter of the Fetters, I marvel my noble lord, or Master Varney, would think of lodging guests there; and if this Master Tressilian could get any one to keep him company, and in especial a pretty wench, why truly I think he was in the right on't."

"I tell thee," said Lambourne, leading the way into the turnkey's apartment, "thou art an ass — Go bolt the wicket on the stair, and trouble not thy noddle about ghosts. — Give me the winestoup, man; I am somewhat heated with chafing with yonder rascal."

While Lambourne drew a long draught from a pitcher of claret, which he made use of without any cup, the warder went on, vindicating his own belief in the super-natural.



“Thou hast been few hours in this Castle, and hast been for the whole space so drunk, Lambourne, that thou art deaf, dumb, and blind. But we should hear less of your bragging, were you to pass a night with us at full moon, for then the ghost is busiest; and more especially when a rattling wind sets in from the north-west, with some sprinkling of rain, and now and then a growl of thunder. Body o’ me, what crackings and clashings, what groanings and what howlings will there be at such times in Mervyn’s Bower, right as it were over our heads, till the matter of two quarts of distilled waters has not been enough to keep my lads and me together.”

“Pshaw, man!” replied Lambourne, on whom his last draught, joined to repeated visitation of the pitcher upon former occasions, began to make some innovation, “thou speak’st thou know’st not what about spirits. No one knows justly what to say about them; and, in short, least said may in that matter be soonest amended. Some men believe in one thing, some in another — it is all matter of fancy. I have known them of all sorts, my dear Lawrence Lock-the-Door, and sensible men too. There’s a great lord — we’ll pass his name, Lawrence — he believes in the stars and the moon, the



planets and their courses, and so forth, and that they twinkle exclusively for his benefit; when in sober, or rather in drunken truth, Lawrence, they are only shining to keep honest fellows like me out of the kennel. Well, sir, let his humour pass, he is great enough to indulge it. — Then look ye, there is another — a very learned man, I promise you, and can vent Greek and Hebrew as I can Thieves'-latin — he has an humour of sympathies and antipathies — of changing lead into gold and the like — why, via, let that pass too, and let him pay those in transmigrated coin, who are fools enough to let it be current with them. — Then here comest thou thyself, another great man, though neither learned nor noble, yet full six feet high, and thou, like a purblind mole, must needs believe in ghosts and goblins, and such like. — Now, there is, besides, a great man — that is, a great little man, or a little great man, my dear Lawrence — and his name begins with V. and what believes he? Why nothing, honest Lawrence — nothing in earth, heaven, or hell; and for my part, if I believe there is a devil, it is only because I think there must be some one to catch our friend by the back « when soul and body sever,” as the ballad says — for your antecedent will have a consequent — *raro antecedentem*, as Doctor Bricham was



wont to say — But this is Greek to you now, honest Lawrence, and in sooth learning is dry work — Hand me the pitcher once more.”

“In faith, if you drink more, Michael,” said the Warder, “you will be in sorry case either to play Arion or to wait on your master on such a solemn night; and I expect each moment to hear the great bell toll for the muster at Mortimer’s Tower, to receive the Queen.”

While Staples remonstrated, Lambourne drank; and then setting down the pitcher, which was nearly emptied, with a deep sigh, he said, in an under tone, which soon rose to a high one as his speech proceeded, “Never mind, Lawrence — if I be drunk, I know that shall make Varney uphold me sober. But, as I said, never mind, I can carry my drink discreetly. Moreover, I am to go on the water as Orion, and shall take cold unless I take something comfortable before-hand. Not play Orion! Let us see the best roarer that ever strained his lungs for twelve pence outmouth me. What if they see me a little disguised? — Wherefore should any man be sober to-night? answer me that — It is matter of loyalty to be merry — and I tell thee, there are those in the castle, who if they are not merry when drunk, have little chance to be merry when sober — I name no names,



**Lawrence.** But your pottle of sack is a fine shoeing-horn to pull on a loyal humour, and a merry one. Huzza for Queen Elizabeth! — for the noble Leicester! — for the worshipful Master Varney! — and for Michael Lambourne, that can turn them all round his finger!”

So saying, he walked down stairs, and across the inner court.

The Warder looked after him, shook his head, and while he drew close and locked a wicket, which, crossing the stair-case, rendered it impossible for any one to ascend higher than the storey immediately beneath Mervyn's Bower, as Tressilian's chamber was named, he thus soliloquized with himself — “It's a good thing to be a favourite — I well nigh lost mine office, because one frosty morning Master Varney thought I smelled of aquavitæ; and this fellow can appear before him drunk as a wine-skin, and yet meet no rebuke. But then he is a pestilent clever fellow withal, and no one can understand above one half of what he says.”



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## CHAPTER XXX.

*Now bid the steeple rock — she comes, she  
comes! —*

*Speak for us, bells — speak for us, shrill-  
tongued tuckets.*

*Stand to thy linstock, gunner; let thy cannon  
Play such a peal, as if a paynim foe  
Came stretch'd in turban'd ranks to storm the  
ramparts.*

*We will have pageants too — but that craves  
wit,*

*And I'm a rough-hewn soldier.*

*The Virgin Queen—a Tragi-Comedy.*

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TRESSILIAN, when Wayland had left him, as mentioned in the last chapter, remained uncertain what he ought next to do, when Raleigh and Blount came up to him arm in arm, yet, according to their wont, very eagerly disputing together. Tressilian had no great desire for their



society in the present state of his feelings, but there was no possibility of avoiding them; and indeed he felt that, bound by his promise not to approach Amy, or take any step in her behalf, it would be his best course at once to mix with general society, and to exhibit on his brow as little as he could of the anguish and uncertainty which sat heavy at his heart. He therefore made a virtue of necessity, and hailed his comrades with, "All mirth to you, gentlemen. Whence come ye?"

"From Warwick, to be sure," said Blount; "we must needs home to change our habits, like poor players, who are fain to multiply their persons to outward appearance by change of suits; and you had better do the like, Tressilian."

"Blount is right," said Raleigh; "the Queen loves such marks of deference, and notices, as wanting in respect, those who, not arriving in her immediate attendance, may appear in their soiled and ruffled riding dress. But look at Blount himself, Tressilian, for the love of laughter, and see how his villainous tailor hath apparelled him — in blue, green, and crimson, with carnation ribbons, and yellow roses in his shoes!"



“Why, what would'st thou have?” said Blount. “I told the cross-legged thief to do his best, and spare no cost; and methinks these things are gay enough — gayer than thine own — I'll be judged by Tressilian.”

“I agree — I agree,” said Walter Raleigh. “Judge betwixt us, Tressilian, for the love of heaven!”

Tressilian, thus appealed to, looked at them both, and was immediately sensible at a single glance, that honest Blount had taken upon the tailor's warrant the pied garments which he had chosen to make, and was as much embarrassed by the quantity of points and ribands which garnished his dress, as a clown is in a holiday suit; while the dress of Raleigh was a well-fancied and rich suit, which the wearer bore as a garb too well adapted to his elegant person to attract particular attention. Tressilian said, therefore, “That Blount's dress was finest, but Raleigh's the best fancied.”

Blount was satisfied with his decision. “I knew mine was finest,” he said; “if that knave Double-stitch had brought me home such a simple doublet as that of Raleigh's, I would have beat his brains out with his own pressing-iron. Nay, if we must be fools, ever let us be fools of the first head, say I.”



“But why gettest thou not on thy braveries, Tressilian?” said Raleigh.

“I am excluded from my apartment by a silly mistake,” said Tressilian, “and separated for the time from my baggage. I was about to seek thee, to beseech a share of thy lodging.”

“And welcome,” said Raleigh; “it is a noble one. My Lord of Leicester has done us that kindness, and lodged us in princely fashion. If his courtesy be extorted reluctantly, it is at least extended far. I would advise you to tell your streight to the Earl’s chamberlain — you will have instant redress.”

“Nay, it is not worth while, since you can spare me room,” replied Tressilian — “I would not be troublesome. — Has any one come hither with you?”

“O, ay,” said Blount; “Varney and a whole tribe of Leicestrians, besides about a score of us honest Sussex folks. — We are all, it seems, to receive the Queen at what they call the Gallery-tower, and witness some fooleries there; and then we’re to remain in attendance upon the Queen in the Great Hall, God bless the mark, while those who are now waiting upon her Grace get rid of their slough, and doff their riding-suits. Heaven help me, if her Grace



should speak to me, I shall never know what to answer!"

"And what has detained them so long at Warwick?" said Tressilian, unwilling that their conversation should return to his own affairs.

"Such a succession of fooleries," said Blount, as were never seen at Bartholomew-fair. We have had speeches and players, and dogs and bears, and men making monkies, and women moppets of themselves — I marvel the Queen could endure it. But ever and anon came in something of the lovely light of her gracious countenance, or some such trash. Ah! vanity makes a fool of the wisest. But, come, let us on to this same Gallery-tower, — though I see not what thou, Tressilian, canst do with thy riding-dress and boots."

"I will take my station behind thee, Blount," said Tressilian, who saw that his friend's unusual finery had taken a strong hold of his imagination; "thy goodly size and gay dress will cover my defects."

"And so thou shalt, Edmund," said Blount. "In faith I am glad thou think'st my garb well-fancied, for all Master Wittypate here; for when one does a foolish thing, it is right to do it handsomely."



So saying, Blount cocked his beaver, threw out his leg, and marched manfully forward, as if at the head of his brigade of pikemen, ever and anon looking with complaisance on his crimson stockings, and the huge yellow roses which blossomed on his shoes. Tressilian followed, wrapped in his own sad thoughts, and scarce minding Raleigh, whose quick fancy, amused by the awkward vanity of his respectable friend, vented itself in jests, which he whispered into Tressilian's ear.

In this manner they crossed the long bridge, or tilt-yard, and took their station, with other gentlemen of quality, before the outer gate of the Gallery or Entrance-tower. The whole amounted to about forty persons, all selected as of the first rank under that of knighthood, and were disposed in double rows on either side of the gate, like a guard of honour, within the close hedge of pikes and partizans, which was formed by Leicester's retainers, wearing his liveries. The gentlemen carried no arms, save their swords and daggers. These gallants were as gaily dressed as imagination could devise; and as the garb of the time permitted a great display of expensive magnificence, nought was to be seen but velvet and cloth of gold and silver, ribands, feathers, gems, and golden chains. In



spite of his more serious subjects of distress, Tressilian could not help feeling, that he, with his riding-suit, however handsome it might be, made rather an unworthy figure among these "fierce vanities," and the rather because he saw that his dishabille was the subject of wonder among his own friends, and of scorn among the partizans of Leicester.

We could not suppress this fact, though it may seem something at variance with the gravity of Tressilian's character; but the truth is, that a regard for personal appearance is a species of self-love, from which the wisest are not exempt, and to which the mind clings so instinctively, that not only the soldier advancing to almost inevitable death, but even the doomed criminal who goes to certain execution, shews an anxiety to array his person to the best advantage. But this is a digression.

It was the twilight of a summer night, (9th July, 1575,) the sun having for some time set, and all were in anxious expectation of the Queen's immediate approach. The multitude had remained assembled for many hours, and their numbers were still rather on the increase. A profuse distribution of refreshments, together with roasted oxen, and barrels of ale set a-broach in different places of the road, had kept the po-



pulace in perfect love and loyalty towards the Queen and her favourite, which might have somewhat abated had fasting been added to watching. They passed away the time, therefore, with the usual popular amusements of whooping, hallooing, shrieking, and playing rude tricks upon each other, forming the chorus of discordant sounds usual on such occasions. These prevailed all through the crowded roads and fields, and especially beyond the gate of the Chace, where the greater number of the common sort were stationed; when, all of a sudden, a single rocket was seen to shoot into the atmosphere, and, at the instant, farheard over flood and field, the great bell of the Castle tolled.

Immediately there was a pause of dead silence, succeeded by a deep hum of expectation, the united voice of many thousands, none of whom spoke above their breath; or, to use a singular expression, the whisper of an immense multitude.

"They come now, for certain," said Raleigh. "Tressilian, that sound is grand. We hear it from this distance, as mariners, after a long voyage, hear, upon their night-watch, the tide rush upon some distant and unknown shore."



“Mass!” answered Blount; “I hear it rather as I used to hear mine own kine lowing from the close of Wittens - westlowe.”

“He will assuredly graze presently,” said Raleigh to Tressilian; “his thought is all of fat oxen and fertile meadows — he grows little better than one of his own beeves, and only becomes grand when he is provoked to pushing and goring.”

“We shall have him at that presently,” said Tressilian, “if you spare not your wit.”

“Tush, I care not,” answered Raleigh; “but thou too, Tressilian, hast turned a kind of owl, that flies only by night; hast exchanged thy songs for screechings, and good company for an ivytod.”

“But what manner of animal art thou thyself, Raleigh,” said Tressilian, “that thou holdest us all so lightly?”

“Who, I?” replied Raleigh. “An eagle am I, that never will think of dull earth, while there is a heaven to soar in, and a sun to gaze upon.”

“Well bragged, by Saint Barnaby!” said Blount; “but, good Master Eagle, beware the cage, and beware the fowler. Many birds have flown as high, that I have seen stuffed with



straw, and hung up to scare kites. — But hark, what a dead silence hath fallen on them at once!”

“The procession pauses,” said Raleigh, “at the gate of the Chace, where a sybil, one of the *fatidicae*, meets the Queen, to tell her fortune. I saw the verses; there is little savour in them, and her Grace has been already crammed full with such poetical compliments. She whispered to me during the Recorder’s speech yonder, at Ford-mill, as she entered the liberties of Warwick, how she was *,pertæsa barbaræ loquelæ.*”

“The Queen whispered to *him!*” said Blount, in a kind of soliloquy; “Good God, to what will this world come!”

His farther meditations were interrupted by a shout of applause from the multitude, so tremendously vociferous, that the country echoed for miles round. The guards, thickly stationed upon the road by which the Queen was to advance, caught up the acclamation, which ran like wild-fire to the Castle, and announced to all within that Queen Elizabeth had entered the Royal Chace of Kenilworth. The whole music of the Castle sounded at once, and a round of artillery, with a salvo of small arms, was discharged from the battlements; but the noise of



drums and trumpets, and even of the cannon themselves, was but faintly heard, amidst the roaring and reiterated welcomes of the multitude.

As the noise began to abate, a broad glare of light was seen to appear from the gate of the Park, and, broadening and brightening as it came nearer, advanced along the open and fair avenue that led towards the Gallery-tower; and which, as we have already noticed, was lined on either hand by the retainers of the Earl of Leicester. The word was passed along the line, "The Queen! The Queen! Silence, and stand fast!" Onward came the cavalcade, illuminated by two hundred thick waxen torches, in the hands of as many horsemen; which cast a light like that of broad day all around the procession, but especially on the principal groupe, of which the Queen herself, arrayed in the most splendid manner, and blazing with jewels, formed the central figure. She was mounted on a milk-white horse, which she reined with peculiar grace and dignity; and in the whole of her stately and noble carriage, you saw the daughter of an hundred kings.

The ladies of the court, who rode beside her Majesty, had taken especial care that their own external appearance should not be more glorious



than their rank and the occasion altogether demanded, so that no inferior luminary might appear to approach the orbit of royalty. But their personal charms, and the magnificence by which, under every prudential restraint, they were necessarily distinguished, exhibited them as the very flower of a realm so far famed for splendour and beauty. The magnificence of the courtiers, free from such restraints as prudence imposed on the ladies, was yet more unbounded.

Leicester, who glittered like a golden image with jewels and cloth of gold, rode on her Majesty's right hand, as well in quality of her host, as of her Master of the Horse. The black steed which he mounted had not a single white hair on his body, and was one of the most renowned chargers in Europe, having been purchased by the Earl at large expence for this royal occasion. As the noble steed chafed at the slow pace of the procession, and, arching his stately neck, champed on the silver bits which restrained him, the foam flew from his mouth, and specked his well-formed limbs as if with spots of snow. The rider well became the high place which he held, and the proud animal which he bestrode; for no man in England, or perhaps in Europe, was more perfect than Dudley in horsemanship, and all other exercises belonging to



his quality. He was bareheaded, as were all the courtiers in the train; and the red torch-light shone upon his long curled tresses of dark hair, and on his noble features, to the beauty of which even the severest criticism could only object the lordly fault, as it may be termed, of a forehead somewhat too high. On that proud evening, those features wore all the grateful solicitude of a subject, to shew himself sensible of the high honour which the Queen was conferring on him, and all the pride and satisfaction which became so glorious a moment. Yet, though neither eye nor feature betrayed aught but feelings which suited the occasion, some of the Earl's personal attendants remarked, that he was unusually pale, and they expressed to each other their fear that he was taking more fatigue than consisted with his health.

Varney followed close behind his master, as the principal esquire in waiting, and had charge of his lordship's black velvet bonnet, garnished with a clasp of diamonds, and surmounted by a white plume. He kept his eye constantly on his master; and, for reasons with which the reader is not unacquainted, was, among Leicester's numerous dependants, he who was most anxious that his Lord's strength and resolution should carry him successfully through a day so agitating.



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For although Varney was one of the few — the very few moral monsters, who contrive to lull to sleep the remorse of their own bosoms, and are drugged into moral insensibility by atheism, as men in extreme agony are lulled by opium, yet he knew that in the breast of his patron there was already awakened the fire that is never quenched, and that his lord felt, amid all the pomp and magnificence we have described, the gnawing of the worm that dieth not. Still, however, assured as Lord Leicester stood, by Varney's own intelligence, that his Countess laboured under an indisposition which formed an unanswerable apology to the Queen for her not appearing at Kenilworth, there was little danger, his wily retainer thought, that a man so ambitious would betray himself by giving way to any external weakness.

The train, male and female, who attended immediately upon the Queen's person, were of course of the bravest and the fairest, — the highest born nobles, and the wisest counsellors, of that distinguished reign, to repeat whose names were but to weary the reader. Behind came a long crowd of knights and gentlemen, whose rank and birth, however distinguished, were thrown into shade, as their persons into



the rear of a procession, whose front was of such august majesty.

Thus marshalled, the cavalcade approached the Gallery-tower, which formed, as we have often observed, the extreme barrier of the Castle.

It was now the part of the huge porter to step forward; but the lubbard was so overwhelmed with confusion of spirit, — the contents of one immense black jack of double ale, which he had just drank to quicken his memory, having at the same time treacherously confused the brain it was intended to clear, — that he only groaned piteously. and remained sitting on his stone seat; and the Queen would have passed on without greeting, had not the gigantic warder's secret ally, Flibbertigibbet, who lay perdue behind him, thrust a pin into the rear of the short femoral garment which we elsewhere described.

The porter uttered a sort of a yell, which came not amiss into his part, started up with his club, and dealt a sound douse or two on each side of him; and then, like a coach-horse pricked by the spur, started off at once into the full career of his address, and by dint of active prompting on the part of Dickie Sludge, delivered, in sounds of gigantic intonation, a speech which may be thus abridged; — — the reader



being to suppose that the first lines were addressed to the throng who approached the gateway: the conclusion, at the approach of the Queen, upon sight of whom, as struck by some heavenly vision, the gigantic warder dropped his club, resigned his keys, and gave open way to the Goddess of the night, and all her magnificent train.

“What stir, what turmoil, have we for the  
nones?

Stand back, my masters, or beware your  
bones!

Sirs, I'm a warder, and no man of straw,  
My voice keeps order, and my club gives law.

Yet soft — nay stay — what vision have we  
here?

What dainty darling's this — what peerless  
peer?

What loveliest face, that loving ranks enfold,  
Like brightest diamond chased in purest gold?  
Dazzled and blind, mine office I forsake,  
My club, my key, my knee, my homage  
take.

Bright paragon, pass on in joy and bliss; —  
Beshrew the gate that opes not wide at such  
a sight as this!”



Elizabeth received most graciously the homage of the herculean porter, and, bending her head to him in requital, passed through his guarded tower, from the top of which was poured a clamorous blast of warlike music, which was replied to by other bands of minstrelsy placed at different points on the Castle walls, and by others again stationed in the Chace; while the tones of the one, as they yet vibrated on the echoes, were caught up and answered by new harmony from different quarters.

Amidst these bursts of music, which, as if the work of enchantment, seemed now close at hand, now softened by distant space, now wailing so low and sweet as if that distance was gradually prolonged until only the last lingering strains alone could reach the ear, Queen Elizabeth crossed the Gallery-tower, and came upon the long bridge, which extended from thence to Mortimer's Tower, and which was already as light as day, so many torches had been fastened to the palisades on either side. Most of the nobles here alighted, and sent their horses to the neighbouring village of Kenilworth, following the Queen on foot, as did the gentlemen who had stood in array to receive her at the Gallery-tower.



On this occasion, as at different times during the evening, Raleigh addressed himself to Tressilian, and was not a little surprised at his vague and unsatisfactory answers; which, joined to his leaving his apartment without any assigned reason, appearing in an undress when it was likely to be offensive to the Queen, and some other symptoms of irregularity which he thought he discovered, led him to doubt whether his friend did not labour under some temporary derangement.

Meanwhile, the Queen had no sooner stepped on the bridge than a new spectacle was provided; for as soon as the music gave signal that she was so far advanced, a raft, so disposed as to resemble a small floating island, illuminated by a great variety of torches, and surrounded by floating pageants formed to represent sea-horses, on which sat Tritons, Nereids, and other fabulous deities of the seas and rivers, made its appearance upon the lake, and issuing from behind a small heronry where it had been concealed, floated gently towards the farther end of the bridge.

On the islet appeared a beautiful woman, clad in a watchet-coloured silken mantle, bound



with a broad girdle, inscribed with characters like the phylacteries of the Hebrews. Her feet and arms were bare, but her wrists and ancles were adorned with gold bracelets of uncommon size. Amidst her long silky black hair, she wore a crown or chaplet of artificial misletoe, and bore in her hand a rod of ebony tipped with silver. Two Nymphs attended on her, dressed in the same antique and mystical guise.

The pageant was so well managed, that this Lady of the Floating Island, having performed her voyage with much picturesque effect, landed at Mortimer's Tower with her two attendants, just as Elizabeth presented herself before that outwork. The stranger then, in a well-penned speech, announced herself as that famous Lady of the Lake, renowned in the stories of King Arthur, who had nursed the youth of the redoubted Sir Lancelot, and whose beauty had proved too powerful both for the wisdom and the spells of the mighty Merlin. Since that early period she had remained possessed of her crystal dominions, she said, despite the various men of fame and might by whom Kenilworth had been successively tenanted. The Saxons, the Danes, the Normans, the Saintlowes, the Clintons, the Mountforts, the Mortimers, the Plantagenets,



great though they were in arms and magnificence, had never, she said, caused her to raise her head from the waters which hid her crystal palace. But a greater than all these great names had now appeared, and she came in homage and duty to welcome the peerless Elizabeth to all sport, which the Castle and its environs, which lake or land could afford.

The Queen received this address also with great courtesy, and made answer in raillery, "We thought this lake had belonged to our own dominions, fair dame; but since so famed a lady claims it for hers, we will be glad at some other time to have further communing with you touching our joint interests."

With this gracious answer the Lady of the Lake vanished, and Arion, who was amongst the maritime deities, appeared upon his dolphin. But Lambourne, who had taken upon him the part in the absence of Wayland, being chilled with remaining immersed in an element to which he was not friendly, having never got his speech by heart, and not having, like the porter, the advantage of a prompter, paid it off with impudence, tearing off his vizard, and swearing, "Cogs bones! he was none of Arion or Orion



either, but honest Mike Lambourne, that had been drinking her Majesty's health from morning till midnight, and was come to bid her heartily welcome to Kenilworth Castle."

This unpremeditated buffoonery answered the purpose probably better than the set speech would have done. The Queen laughed heartily, and swore (in her turn) that he had made the best speech she had heard that day. Lambourne, who instantly saw his jest had saved his bones, jumped on shore, gave his dolphin a kick, and declared he would never meddle with fish again, except at dinner.

At the same time that the Queen was about to enter the Castle, that memorable discharge of fireworks by water and land took place, which Master Laneham, formerly introduced to the reader, has strained all his eloquence to describe.

"Such," says the Clerk of the Council-chamber door, "was the blaze of burning darts, the gleams of stars coruscant, the streams and hail of fiery sparks, lightnings of wild-fire, and flight-shot of thunderbolts, with continuance, terror, and vehemency, that the heavens thundered, the waters surged, and the earth shook; and



for my part, hardy as I am, it made me very vengeably afraid." \*

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\* See Laneham's Account of the Queen's Entertainment at Killingworth Castle, in 1575, a very diverting tract, written by as great a coxcomb as ever blotted paper. The original is extremely rare, but it has been twice reprinted; once in Mr Nicholas's very curious and interesting collection of the Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth, vol. I.; and more lately in No. 1. of a work termed *Kenilworth Illustrated*, beautifully printed at Chiswick, for Meridew of Coventry, and Radclyff of Birmingham, and which, if continued with the same good taste and execution, will be one of the finest antiquarian publications that has lately appeared.

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